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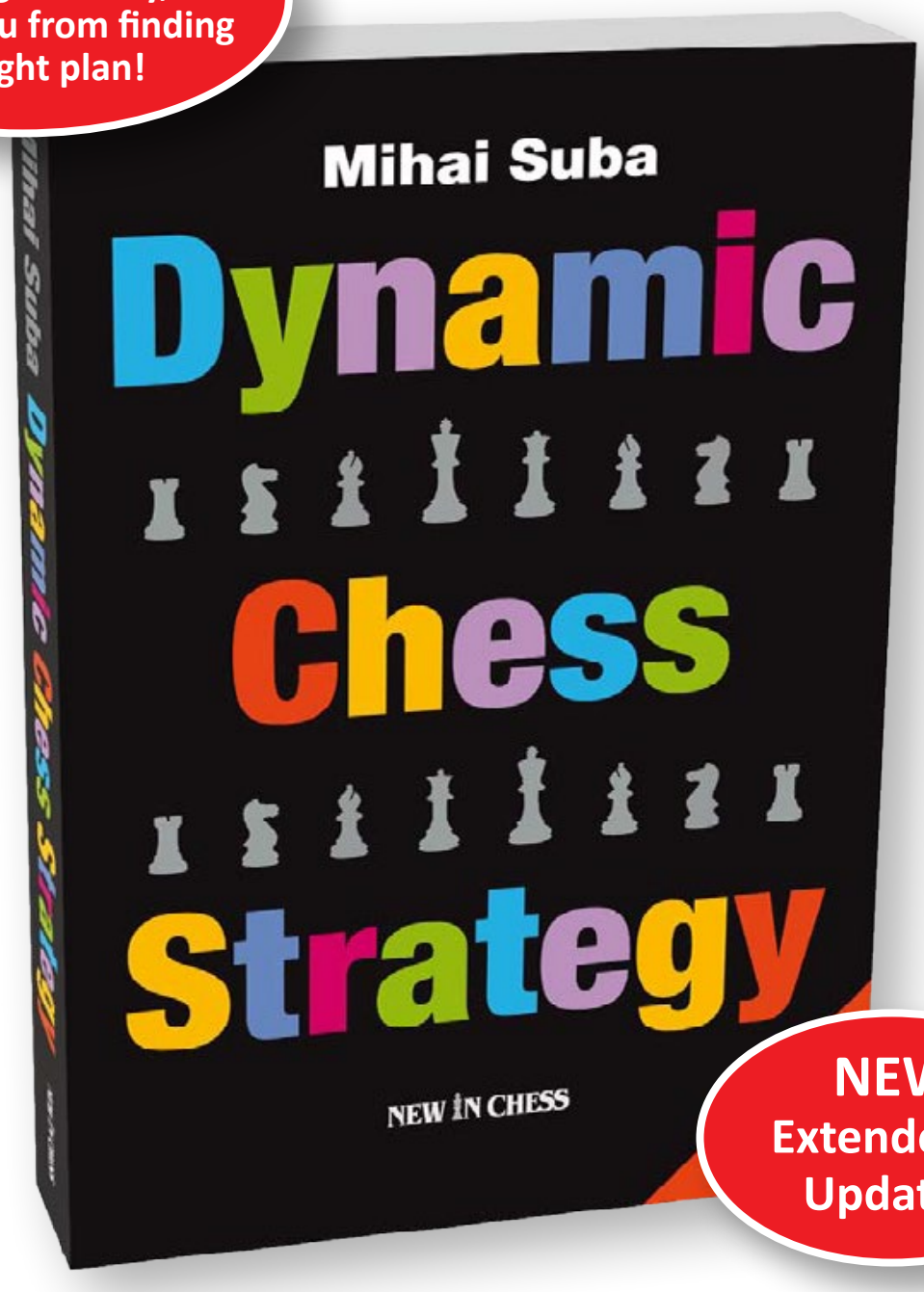

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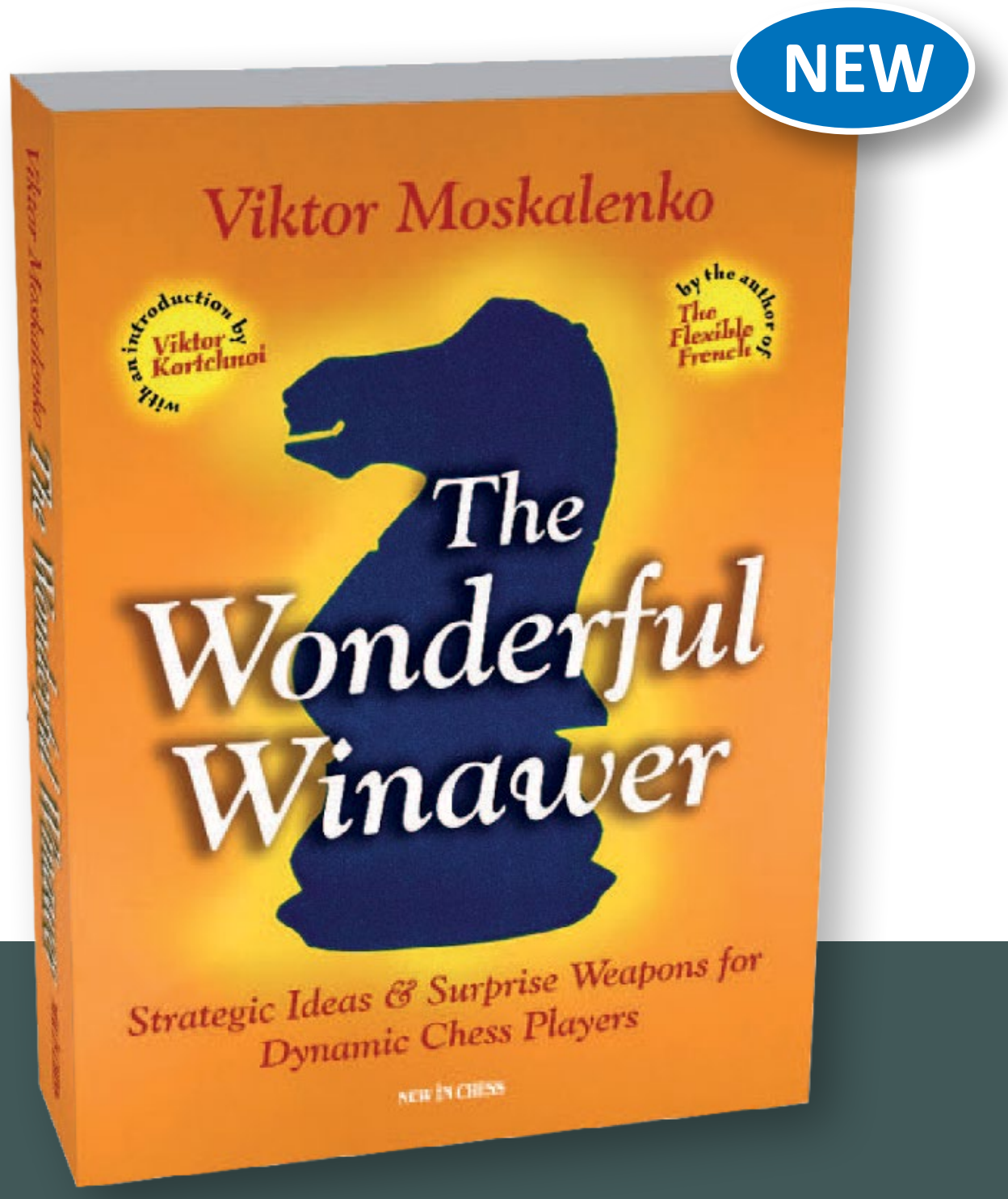
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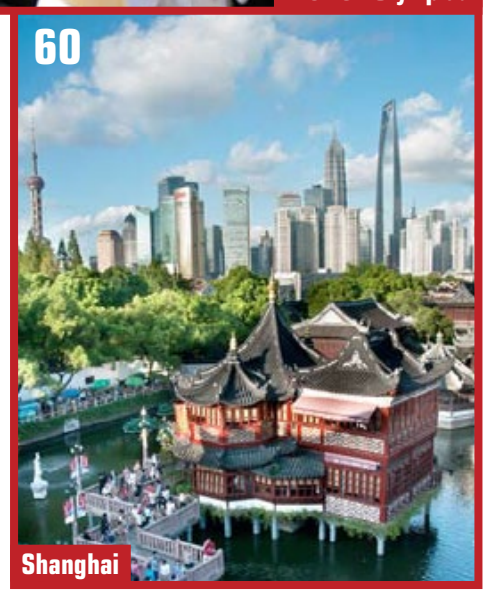

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10 Broken Promises and Switched-Off Microphones
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18 'Genius' Ivanchuk Leads Ukraine to Gold
The months leading up to the 39th Chess Olympiad were overshadowed by serious doubts about the hotel capacity in Khanty-Mansiysk and worries about the ever-changing schedules of the charters that were to take the participants to Siberia. But once the players had arrived and checked into their hotels, relief and the Olympic spirit prevailed. In spite of the prospect of a € 50,000 bonus (per player) the Russian favourites missed their goal by a hair's breadth and had to watch Ukraine, fired on by a brilliant Vasily Ivanchuk, repeat their triumph of Calvia 2004.

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Just like the Russian men, the Russian women came to Khanty-Mansiysk as top-seeds, but as their male colleagues stumbled once again, the ladies triumphed with flying colours. Never letting off steam they won all 11 matches to claim the first ever Vera Menchik Cup in the history of their country.

54 A Tale of Two Swamps
A light workload standing in as Bermuda's non-playing captain allowed Graham Hillyard to take a tour of the Khanty-Mansiysk scene.

60 Shirov Shines in Shanghai
Luck played a role, but so did creativeness, resilience and strong motivation. Alexey Shirov won the first stage of the 2010 Grand Slam Masters Final held at the Expo and the famous Lu Bo Lang Club in Shanghai.

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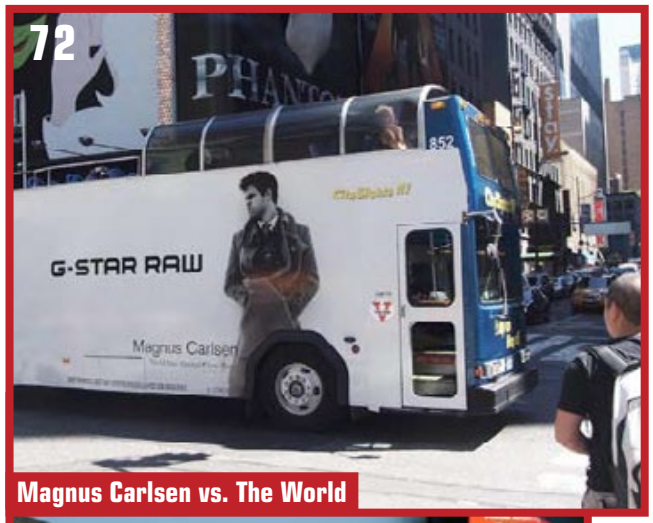

Magnus Carlsen vs. The World

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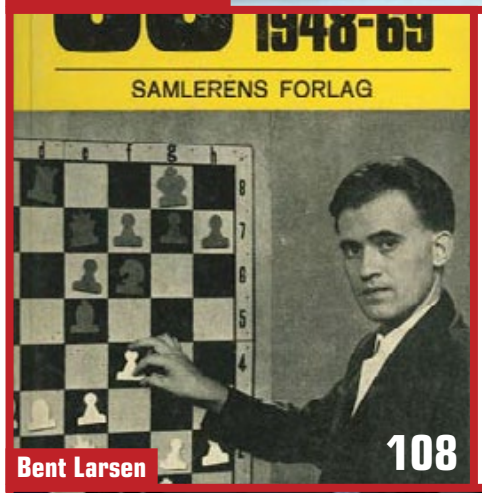

Bent Larsen

Just Checking

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PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
Peter Doggers, David Llada

COVER PHOTO
Vasily Ivanchuk: New In Chess

NIC'S CAFÉ

Dramatic Turn

Politically speaking, the 81st FIDE Congress not only saw the re-election of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov as FIDE president. The next day the impressive Chess Academy building of Khanty-Mansiysk was also the scene of the elections that determined the new presidents of the different zones. Particularly the presidency of the European Chess Union was hotly contested and closely followed. Small wonder if you take a look at the names of the candidates. To begin with, there was Ali Nihat Yazici, the highly active president of the Turkish chess federation and a declared supporter of Ilyumzhinov. Next there was Silvio Danailov, the vice-president of the Bulgarian federation,

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Robert von Weizsäcker and two members of his ticket, GMs Johann Hjartarson and Ivan Sokolov.

who is first and foremost known as Veselin Topalov's manager. And finally there was Robert von Weizsäcker, the president of the German chess federation. To all appearances, Von Weizsäcker was the clear favourite in this race. He could count on the Western European votes to begin with and he had the firm support of Kasparov and Karpov. There was just one fly in the ointment: you didn't have to observe Mr von Weizsäcker for long to understand that the last thing in the world he wanted to be was president of the ECU! He had yielded to K&K's pleas to run, and now he was here to see what would happen. To complicate matters,

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New ECU President Silvio Danailov.

he felt fairly exhausted when he arrived in Siberia. This was another blow to his ambitions to try and convince any delegates of his programme, especially with opponents that were ready to go with hardly any sleep. Von Weizsäcker's excursion into ECU politics took a dramatic turn when, shortly before the elections, he was accosted by FIDE treasurer Nigel Freeman, who told him that FIDE was considering suing the federations (including Germany) that had taken them to court in Lausanne in order to retrieve the legal costs of the case. This was the straw that broke the camel's back. He didn't want to be here in the first place and now he was being threatened to boot. Shortly afterwards Von Weizsäcker fainted and was rushed to hospital, where the first fears that he had suffered a heart-attack were dispelled. Once he had recovered a bit, he declined the offer to postpone the ECU election to the next day. He probably understood as well as anyone else that this one-day delay would no longer make a difference. The first voting round left no doubt about his chances. Von Weizsäcker got only nine votes, against 25 for Danailov and 20 for Nihat Yazici. As no candidate had won more than 50% of the votes, a second voting round was held without the president of the German chess federation. Silvio Danailov kept his lead, and with 30 votes against 24 the Bulgarian became the new president of the European Chess Union.

Pleasant and Comfortable

Another vote that never fails to excite the congress-goers, is the one that decides where the Olympiad will be held four years from now. Thus it was in Turin in 2006 that it was decided that this year's Olympiad would be in Khanty-Mansiysk. At the time, the alternatives were Montenegro and Argentina, two destinations that sounded more appealing to most chess players. However, as the general conviction was that FIDE wanted to have the Olympiad on Russian soil to guarantee Ilyumzhinov's re-election, no one was really surprised that Montenegro and Argentina didn't stand a chance. This time there were two candidates, the seaside resort of Albena in Bulgaria and Tromsø, the biggest Nordic city north of the Arctic Circle. The Norwegian bid was warmly supported by Magnus Carlsen, who could regularly be found in their promotional stand after the games, as well as by current and former Women's World Champions Alexandra Kosteniuk and Susan Polgar. The ambassadors of the Bulgarian bid were former World Champions Veselin Topalov and Antoaneta Stefanova. The general

expectation was that Tromsø was the clear favourite, as their bid was better prepared and their budget was considerably higher than that of their rivals. And indeed, the Norwegians won comfortably, 95

The 2014 Olympiad will be in Tromsø.

against 47, and so, after the 40th Olympiad in Istanbul in 2012, the 41st Olympiad will be in Tromsø, Norway, in 2014. And in case you were wondering, the Tromsø Olympiad will be held in the first two weeks of August, when, according to the bid, 'the climate is pleasant and comfortable'.

Lahno Blitz Champ

Almost every chess player loves to play blitz, and there is no reason to think that women chess players are any different in their pas-

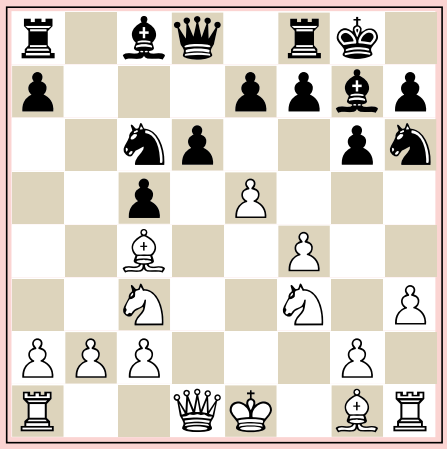
Women Blitz World Champion Kateryna Lahno.

sion for fast play. This supposition was duly confirmed at the Women's Blitz World Championship in Moscow, the first such event since Susan Polgar won a women's blitz world championship in 1992. This time, following Internet qualifiers and the semi-finals, 16 women contested the title in a double round-robin. All possible favourites took part, with the exception of the Chinese girls and Judit Polgar. The driving force behind the championship was Women World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk, who used her influence to find a venue, the Russian State Social University, and an attractive prize-fund. The €10,000 first prize was won by Ukraine's Kateryna Lahno, who led after the first day and maintained her lead on the second day to take the title. She finished one point ahead of Tatiana Kosintseva, who took home €8,000, and one and a half points ahead of the highly talented Valentina Gunina, who earned €6,000.

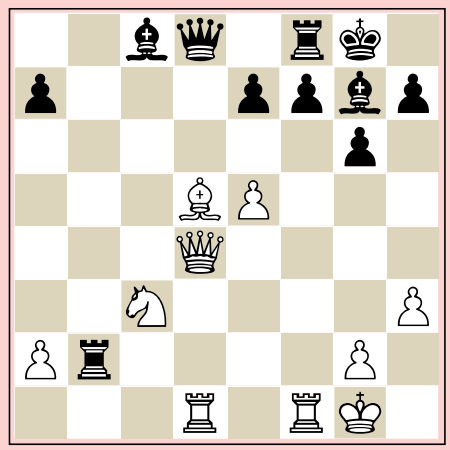
The following game, with ultra-light notes by the new champion, was the one she liked best.

PU 12.5 – B09
Antoaneta Stefanova
Kateryna Lahno
Moscow World Blitz Championship

1.d4 g6 2.e4 d6 3.f4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♗g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♗e3 b6 7.e5 Too early. Better is 7.♕d2. **7...♘g4 8.♗g1 c5** Black has to attack White's centre immediately! **9.dxc5 bxc5 10.h3** 10.♕d5 does not win a rook, because of 10...♕b6! and if 11.♕xa8 ♗b7 traps the queen. **10...♘h6 11.♗c4 ♘c6**



12.♕e2? It was necessary to play 12.♕d2. **12...♘f5 13.♗f2 dxe5** Now White can forget about queenside castling, and my knights are coming to d4. **14.♗d5 ♘cd4! 15.♕d3** Or 15.♘xd4 exd4 16.♗xa8 dxc3 17.0-0 cxb2, and the b-pawn will queen soon. **15...♖b8 16.fxe5 ♖xb2 17.0-0 ♘xc2 18.♖ad1 ♘fd4** Avoiding 18...♘b4?? and 19.♗xf7+ wins the queen. **19.♘xd4 cxd4 20.♗xd4 ♘xd4 21.♕xd4**



21...e6 22.♗b3 ♕xd4+ 23.♖xd4 ♗xe5 24.♖c4 ♗a6 White resigned.

COLOPHON

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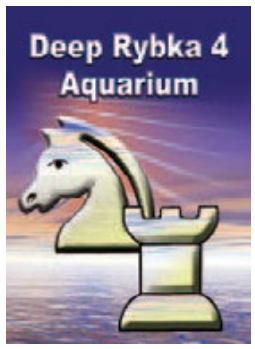

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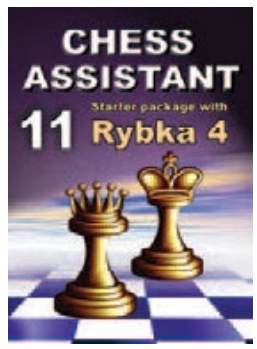

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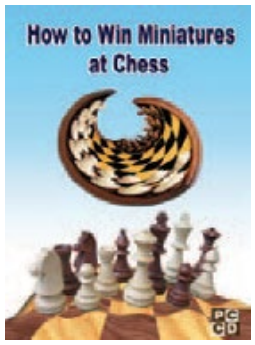

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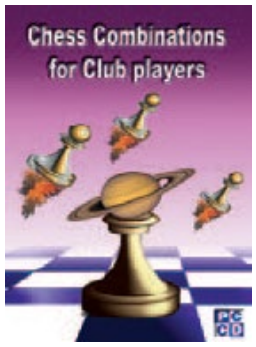

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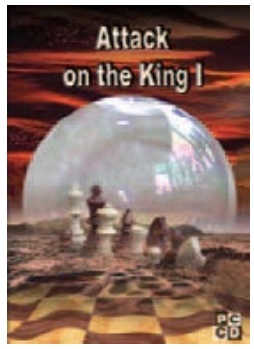

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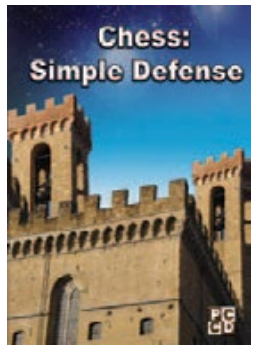

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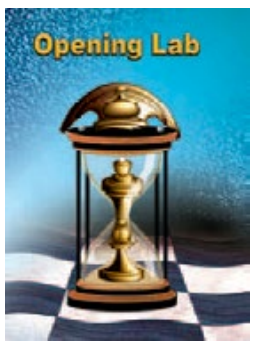

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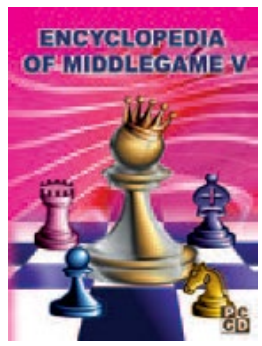

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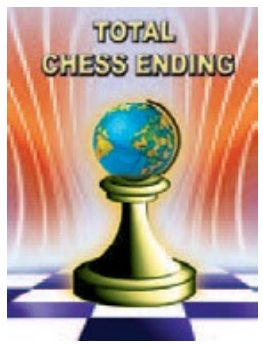

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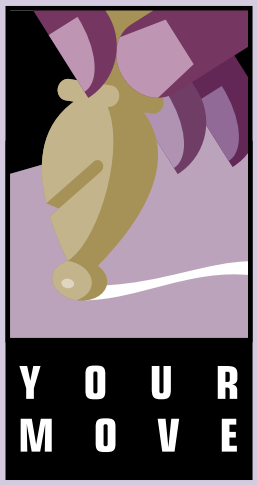

Vision

I saw the interview with Anatoly Karpov in New In Chess 2010/6 and would like to react to what he says about the importance of chess for the education of children. The UK Chess Challenge, the children's competition sponsored by property investment company British Land that I have been running for 10 years, has not produced any grandmasters (besides David Howell), but the numbers of girls and middle strength players have increased. Interestingly, in England, in the recent general election, my chess pupil Rachel Reeves was elected in Parliament. And recently they had an election for the Shadow Cabinet of Ed the Red Miliband and two chess players, Maria and Angela Eagle, got in. These three are women, perhaps the male chess players stick to chess or finance.

We need a vision, and I wrote an article called 'Saving the World' on what specific qualities chess can bring: kindness, knowledge, honesty, ability to work with others, analytical power, decision making ability, ability to withstand pressure. The majority of us are reluctant to think in a visionary way, but it is my opinion that it is our job to teach the world, or if not, to produce the kind of people who are capable of doing so.

Chess players above all are developed thinkers, and they have the quality to speak out par excellence: they can recognize when they have been checkmated. This is an admirable quality, not shared by most of the population.

Our only defence against increasing uniformity and dullness of mind is to develop the independent analytical powers (and the other qualities – see above) of our young people. Otherwise we shall repeat the mistakes of the past.

Michael Basman
Chessington, UK

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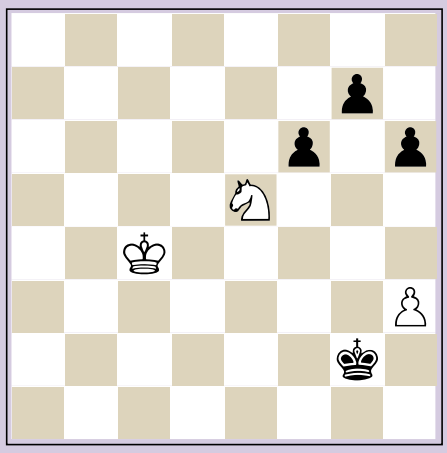
Tablebases

I don't agree with Fabiano Caruana's analysis of his blitz game against Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son from Biel. In New In Chess 2010/6 he says: 'And three pawns will prove too much for the knight.'



However, 53.♘g6! ♔xh3 is a draw according to endgame tablebases.

Marcel Van Herck
Antwerp, Belgium

Tartakower

In New In Chess 2010/6 Genna Sosonko writes in his highly interesting article 'Café Central and the Life and Times of Savielly Tartakower': 'And no one has written his biography.'

It may interest you to know that Dr. Tartakower himself wrote a kind of autobiography, originally published in a series of articles in the Swedish chess magazine *Tidskrift för Schack*. The run of the series, exclusively written for the TfS, started in 1947.

The material was put together by GM Erik Lundin in his book *Schack-Parad 2* (112 pages) in 1987, one year before his death at the age of 84. Erik Lundin was the editor of the TfS during almost a quarter of a century, from 1934 to 1957.

The TfS, by the way, was founded in Copenhagen in 1895. It is still published...

Bo Plato
Hässleholm, Sweden

Right Country, Wrong Year

With interest I read the review by Hans Ree of *Botvinnik-Petrosian, The 1963 World Championship Match*, in New In Chess 2010/6. There is one small inaccuracy I would like to point out. Ree writes about Mikhail Botvinnik: 'Nearsighted as youngsters tend to be, I found it difficult to accept that a man who had made his international debut in Nottingham 1936 was still playing for the world championship.' In fact, Botvinnik made his international debut in the Hastings tournament in 1934/35. It wasn't a successful performance. Emanuel Lasker explained to Botvinnik what had been the cause of his poor playing. He rebuked him for arriving in Hastings only two hours before the tournament was to start and told him that a serious player should arrive one week before play began.

Igor Botvinnik
Moscow, Russia

After barely an hour it began to dawn on Garry Kasparov that the 81st FIDE Congress wasn't going his way.

Bought votes, broken promises and switched-off microphones

Before the elections Anatoly Karpov announced that he had to beat the system that Kirsan Ilyumzhinov had been building up for 15 years. For five months Karpov and his team, led by Garry Kasparov, worked hard and travelled the world seeking support. It was not enough. Ignoring the emphatic plea for impartiality by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov chaired the 81st FIDE Congress himself, systematically silencing his opponents and securing another four years as FIDE president with a landslide 95–55 victory.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam reports from yet another controversial FIDE Congress.

The day before the General Assembly is to vote for a new FIDE president, the foyer of the Ugra Tennis Centre, the venue of the 39th Olympiad, is packed with people circling around the booths of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov ('Kirsan + ♥ = FIDE') and Anatoly Karpov ('Chess could be cool too'). Everywhere you see members of the two tickets talking to delegates, feverishly trying to keep or win votes. Suddenly my attention is drawn to a young couple that is visibly upset. They are from Bosnia, and only the woman speaks English. Pale and excited they are explaining to the people around them that the proxy they are holding is genuine and that the proxy FIDE Vice-President Ali Nihat Yazici has is a fake. She does the talking, he nods emphatically and gestures. The 'fake' proxy was signed in Athens one day before and they have proof that on that day their president was in Sarajevo. How can that be? Impressed by their indignation I urge them to tell their story in the press room. This is what they do, but they are so emotional that it is hard to get the full picture. In an attempt to calm them down I begin to summarize what we believe they are claiming. 'So, Ali wants to use the proxy to vote for Ilyumzhinov, whereas you want to vote for Karpov?' With an abrupt gesture she turns to me to deny my suggestion: 'No, we also want to vote for Ilyumzhinov! Of course we want to vote for him. Ali gave us $ 25,000 in chess material if we voted for Ilyumzhinov and him, and they also paid our plane tickets. Of course we will vote for him. If not for them we would not have been here.'

Indeed, FIDE elections are complicated. You think you're about to uncover false play and all you discover is how much a vote from a small country is worth at the 2010 elections. Going by the stories that I heard, twenty-five thousand dollars plus plane tickets was the average rate for a vote this time, but of course the vast majority of delegates was not as outspoken as the Bosnian lady. How much exactly was spent on buying votes by Ilyumzhinov and his team we will never know, but the estimate of a member of the Karpov ticket was 'massively more than in Turin'.

Did that automatically make Ilyumzhinov the clear favourite in the elections? Many observers believed so, but there were also doubts and reservations. Perhaps the optimism that Karpov and Kasparov radiated was justified. Perhaps there was a change at hand after all. In any case, everyone seemed convinced that the number of countries that Ilyumzhinov claimed to have behind him on his website was just bluff. Still, most insiders put their money on the Kalmykian candidate. In private, members of the Karpov ticket avowed that they were behind, but that it was a close race and that they might win if a handful of countries saw the light and changed sides.

The evening before the elections, Ilyumzhinov demonstrated once again what a seasoned and clever campaigner he is. While Karpov's men were having appointments with delegates they hoped to persuade at the last moment, the majority of delegates attended a reception of the FIDE president in the Opera House. After 15 years this FIDE president knows exactly where the hearts and minds of most delegates reside. Large tables were filled with exquisite fish and meat and an abundance of drink, and what's more, they remained filled till close to midnight. Nodding her head in appreciation, an expert in Russian matters told me that this superb food could not possibly have come from Khanty-Mansiysk and must have been flown in from Moscow. Which wouldn't really come as a surprise, as there were also groups of dancers, musicians and models that had come from Kalmykia for the occasion.

The evening was the celebration of a change of power earlier that day, when Ilyumzhinov was replaced as Head of Kalmykia by his good friend Alexey Orlov. Some years ago Russian president Putin decreed that the Russian regional presidents would henceforth be called simply 'heads' or 'leaders' and that they had to be replaced after a certain number of terms. And so Ilyumzhinov had no other choice than to resign as Head of Kalmykia. However, this did not stop him from claiming in front of his guests that he had stepped down as president of Kalmykia so that he could now devote all his time to chess. And in his speech Mr Orlov also said that he was happy that he was now 'president of Kalmykia'. But who cared about such quibbles when wining and dining was the motto? In any case, when I left the Opera House I was convinced that by now Karpov would need more than a handful of delegates to change sides to become FIDE president.

The General Assembly convened the next day at 10 a.m. and the main point on the agenda was the presidential elections. This meant that Karpov's lawsuit in Lausanne had not had its desired effect, as the court had ruled that there was no good reason to exclude Ilyumzhinov as a candidate. This conclusion had inspired the incumbent to announce on the FIDE website that FIDE had won the court case in Lausanne, which was stretching the truth considerably. The court had not concluded that Ilyumzhinov was a legal candidate because he had the support of the Russian chess federation or because he was a member of the Mexican chess federation. This the court didn't want to decide on. It only chose to see him as a legal candidate because of the many years that he had already been president and part of the chess world, a conclusion that certainly made sense. In fact, many

NEW IN CHESS

A seasoned and clever campaigner. The evening before the elections Kirsan Ilyumzhinov wined and dined the delegates at a lavish reception in the Opera House.

Karpov supporters in hindsight regretted the court case. First, because it had been counterproductive, as many delegates abhorred the idea, and secondly because they were not without sins themselves either: the membership of Karpov's running mate Richard Conn of the US chess federation could also be questioned.

FIDE's victory claim may have been understandable, but it was also nonsensical. What they didn't mention was that the court ruled that at the elections in Khanty-Mansiysk any FIDE officials with a conflict of interest should be excluded from election-related roles. The main reason why they didn't mention this was because they were going to violate it.

And so, when at 10.45 the General Assembly started it was chaired by Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, one of the two candidates in the elections. A weird sight for anyone who grew up in a democratic country, but nothing out of the ordinary at a FIDE GA.

Having paid respect with a minute of silence to the grandmasters and masters that had died since the previous GA, the next item on the agenda was a report by Geoffrey Borg of the Proxies Commission. These proxies play a pivotal role in the elections, as there are a lot of them. This time there were close to 80(!), 1 of which was rejected and 56 were accepted. The others required the approval of the GA and a discussion on what this approval should be based on.

And then, after 25 minutes, the meeting explodes. The Presidential Board wants to proceed with a roll call in order to determine which delegates are present (and with which proxies), but the Karpov camp protests, asking for a discussion about the proxies first. They only want to have a roll call after it is clear which proxies have been accepted ('You cannot establish a quorum without establishing if the proxies are valid'). One of Karpov's two counsellors, Olga Mouraviova, tries to make her point, but she doesn't get the floor. When she finally grabs a phone it is quickly switched off. Kasparov's voice is louder and he gets his point across to Ilyumzhinov without a microphone. But it doesn't help him much. Suddenly he is verbally attacked by a delegate of the Bermudas who is seated behind him and wants to prove that he can shout even louder. He yells at Kasparov that he should 'respect the house', to which the former World Champion shouts back that that is exactly what he is trying to do. Maxim Dlugy urges Ilyumzhinov to 'go by the agenda, not your agenda'. In the meantime, General Secretary Ignatius Long has stubbornly started the roll call and, cut off from microphones, Karpov and his people feel powerless and frustrated. Throwing her arms in the air, one of the counsellors exclaims: 'These people are shameless'. And she explains that the previous night they and the FIDE lawyers had come to an agreement that the counsellors would be allowed to speak

in the GA. A promise that was instantly broken. There is a curious intermezzo when Vice-President William Kelleher asks for the opponents to be heard ('if Gens Una Sumus means something'). His words meet with a round of applause, but their impact is zero. After the elections Ilyumzhinov revealed to Karpov that all board members had practised for the GA till seven a.m.(!). One wonders if this token sign of democratic feelings by Kelleher was part of the overall strategy.

When Leong finally finishes the roll call, the FIDE board and one Kalmykian hostess applaud. The heated discussions continue, but have little effect on the proceedings, as the microphones in the hall remain switched off. At noon there is a break.

When the meeting is resumed, Deputy-President Georgios Makropoulos increases the pressure by stressing that this is an assembly for the delegates. Journalists are urged into the wings of the hall and are told that if necessary they will be removed. This threat is mainly aimed at the radio and television crews that interviewed Kasparov, Karpov and others when they could not speak in the assembly. I am seated among the delegates with a good view of the stage. As I expect the meeting to last several more hours, I decide not to withdraw into the wings but to remain in the seat of the Swedish delegate that didn't show up in Siberia.

The discussion about the proxies remains heated. Occasionally the opposition is given the floor. Nigel Short can vent his anger about the violation of the procedures as the English delegate and is awarded by Ilyumzhinov by the condescending joke that he is not only a super-grandmaster but also a super-lawyer. Others are consistently ignored. Giovanni Vescovi politely raises his hand asking for the floor at least four times, to no avail. Perhaps the fact that he is a professional lawyer doesn't help the Brazilian GM. Karpov's counsellors don't get the floor either, and when they keep venting their indignation, Ilyumzhinov angrily states that they are observers and should therefore observe. He wants them to sit apart.

Bachar Kouatly, who is not a delegate, but a former candidate for the FIDE presidency, asks the floor through French delegate Jean-Claude Moingt, who claims his English is not good enough to express what he wants to say. Kouatly tries to mediate and asks for a neutral chairman, suggesting Vice-President Kurt Jungwirth as a candidate. However, the Austrian doesn't want to burn his fingers and declines, saying: 'My English is not good enough either. Merci beaucoup, Bachar.' Kouatly will come up with a call for a neutral chairman once again when the 'Peruvian problem' is being discussed. There are two men in the hall

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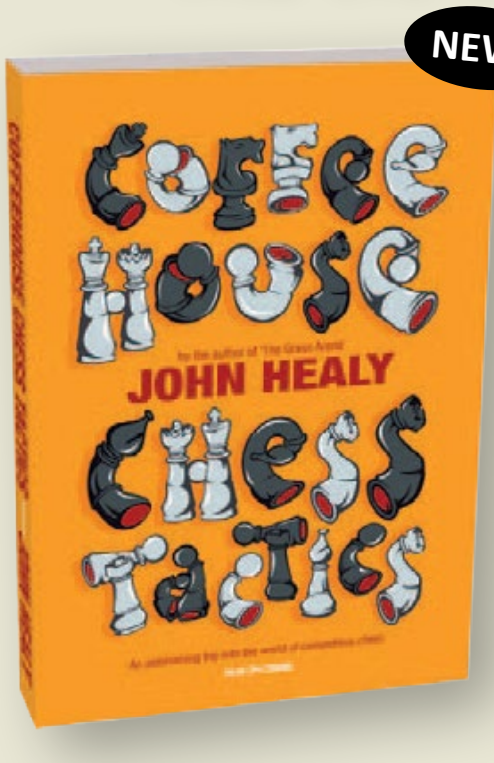

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A NEW IN CHESS PUBLICATION

NEW IN CHESS

'The two men have come to talk about the deal they closed the previous evening. Ilyumzhinov tries to smile and laugh a lot, Karpov is visibly uncomfortable with the situation.'

that claim to be the Peruvian delegate. One, the old president of the federation, and one young man who has all the required letters from his Olympic Committee and his government saying that he is in charge of the Peruvian federation. Ilyumzhinov says he has made some phone calls and sticks with the old president, which is hard to stomach for anyone who has followed the speeches of the two candidates with a neutral attitude. As the old president is intending to vote for Ilyumzhinov and the new one clearly supports Karpov, Kouatly again asks Ilyumzhinov to avoid any suspicions of partiality. The answer he gets is: 'Thank you for your proposal, but I am the FIDE president.' They are some of the few words he speaks in English this day, most of the time he relies on Russian, the translation of which the delegates can follow on headphones.

The debate rages on, but there can be little doubt about the outcome. Short is allowed to criticize the proceedings as long as he starts every objection by introducing himself as 'Nigel Short, delegate of the English chess federation' (that's the procedure, as Ilyumzhinov stresses repeatedly), but is stopped when he asks for one of the counsellors to speak. This Ilyumzhinov doesn't accept. He forbids her to speak and warns that if she tries again she will be removed from the room. In the end most of the proxies are accepted, and it is unclear which side profits from this most. The Karpov camp keeps protesting against the procedures, but they are not heard. When, during a break, Karpov goes behind the table of the FIDE board to use one of their microphones it is also switched off. And when a fair number of delegates leave their seats and express their anger close to the exit of the room, Ilyumzhinov cold-bloodedly walks over to the microphone in front of the audience and, seemingly unperturbed, starts his presidential speech, summing up his accomplishments of the past years. A good part of his speech is lost in the clamour of the opposition, but without showing any emotion he talks for about 15 minutes as if he were rehearsing in front of a mirror, smiling and joking to no one in particular.

Ilyumzhinov's speech is followed by the report of the treasurer, Nigel Freeman, and the report of the Verification Commission. And then the actual moment of the elections has come. Karpov's men can grumble and complain as much as they want, in a corner of the room two cabins are erected where the delegates can vote. Before they go in they have to hand in any camera's, telephones or Blackberries that they may have on them, to avoid a repetition of Turin, where delegates had to prove with photos that they had voted for Ilyumzhinov before they were paid. As a symbol of the tragedy of the one-country-one-vote rule, Kasparov is making a last-ditch effort to win a vote. Papua-New Guinea is present with three people. One of them wants to vote for Ilyumzhinov, another for Karpov. Kasparov sits talking to their third representative, a quiet dark woman. He is friendly and persuasive, but it is unclear what effects his words will have, as she knows nothing about chess and doesn't care who will be elected.

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While they are preparing the vote, I sit thinking why such enormous amounts are invested by a Kalmykian businessman and his supporters to be president of the world chess federation? Russia's willingness to support him can easily be understood. That's a matter of prestige, as he is the only head of an international sports federation that is Russian. What's more, Karpov was no real alternative once he teamed up with Kasparov, who after all is an enemy of the Kremlin. But what else makes it worth such a lot of money to be president of FIDE? Of course Ilyumzhinov's claims that he has put 50 million dollar of his own money in chess are hugely exaggerated, as always when he mentions figures. But suppose he 'only' invested, say, 10 million dollar, why would he do that? Because he loves chess and people tell him he is crazy, as he says himself? He often expresses weird views, but he certainly is not crazy, as he showed once again in these meticulously orchestrated elections. So, what gains does his role as FIDE president bring in that easily make up for these huge investments? What is the secret of his business model? It would be interesting to know and perhaps that's the question his next opponent in the FIDE elections should find the answer to.

The outcome of these elections is a severe blow for Karpov and his team. They had held hopes, and perhaps they were not even that unrealistic, but once the ballots are counted the verdict is harsh. It's a landslide. FIDE cannot be reformed from within: Ilyumzhinov's 95-55 victory says it all.

There's also good reason to believe that his win is a severe blow for chess in the West. Ilyumzhinov has announced that he will shortly visit 50 countries. It's not very likely that any of these countries will be a Western one, and if it is, there's good reason to doubt whether he'll be received by the head of state. What will the outcome mean for the major FIDE events? Will they continue to be held almost exclusively on the Caucasus or in Russia? When I was leaving Khanty-Mansiysk, a high FIDE official told me that a city even much further away in Siberia had shown interest in the individual European championship. He said it with pride and didn't understand my shocked look. The mere thought must certainly send down a shiver down the spines of most European professionals.

The day after the elections Kirsan Ilyumzhinov appears in the press room for a joint press conference with Anatoly Karpov. Immediately after the elections Ilyumzhinov invited Karpov to join his team and be a Vice-President, using his connections within UNICEF and other international organizations. Karpov says he will react to this invitation later, as he is not in time-trouble. The two men have come to talk about the deal they closed the previous evening. Ilyumzhinov tries to smile and laugh a lot, Karpov is visibly uncomfortable with the situation. When they are asked to shake hands before the camera's the former World Champion tries to make it the shortest handshake in history. He also explicitly states that part of their deal is that he will provide the details. To begin with they agreed that FIDE will not make any of the federations that supported Karpov suffer, which in itself is a telling detail after a 'demo-

'You are lucky that you don't have to work with these people who want to take your money all the time.'

cratic vote'. Ilyumzhinov is also prepared to abolish the fees for international titles, as Karpov promised in his campaign, and agrees to raise the number of games in the world championship match to 14 or 16.

Most of the reports of the meeting present it as a friendly rapprochement. For understandable reasons this invoked criticism of Karpov from chess lovers who felt he should avoid any connection with his opponent. They were too rash in their criticism. Later that afternoon I encounter Karpov in the foyer of the Ugra Tennis Centre where, close to the end of the Olympiad, more and more booths are being dismantled. When I ask him whether he is really thinking about working with Ilyumzhinov, he smiles and gives an unequivocal answer: 'Of course not. Do you think I want to see those faces again?' He continues saying that his only purpose in their talk was to protect the people who supported him from any kind of retaliation. In his euphoric state Ilyumzhinov also said a couple of things that struck Karpov as most remarkable. As written above, he revealed that they had rehearsed the GA with the complete board till seven in the morning. But there was more. 'Do you know what the first thing was he said to me?', Karpov asks with a broad smile, rightly suggesting that I will never guess the answer. 'He said, of course you are disappointed. But at the same time you are lucky that you don't have to work with these people who want to take your money all the time.'

‘Genius’ Ivanchuk leads Ukraine to gold

PHOTOS NEW IN CHESS

A big television screen in the centre of Khanty-Mansiysk shows impressions from the Olympiad. Left: Vasily Ivanchuk at the start of the last round.

The months leading up to the 39th Chess Olympiad were overshadowed by serious doubts about the hotel capacity in Khanty-Mansiysk and worries about the ever-changing schedules of the charters that were to take the participants to Siberia. But once the players had arrived and checked into their hotels, relief and the Olympic spirit prevailed. In the Ugra Tennis Centre, the fight for the gold medals was perhaps tenser than ever and was only decided at the very last moment. In spite of the prospect of a €50,000 bonus (per player) the Russian favourites missed their goal by a hair’s breadth and had to watch Ukraine, fired on by a brilliant Vasily Ivanchuk, repeat their triumph of Calvia 2004. A tie with the new champions in the final round brought Israel the bronze medals. We bring you games and impressions from Khanty-Mansiysk and musings about the question whether it’s such a good idea to have a Chess Olympiad in Siberia.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

of the country and do some maths, you realize how much money is being made here.

The wealth of the inhabitants can be gleaned from the up-market cars in the streets, brand-new luxury models and four-wheel drives. Many families even have two cars these days, which, as one inhabitant joked, has led to the first traffic jams. Maybe they occur, but in the week that I took my walks in Khanty-Mansiysk, the traffic was mostly quiet, and whenever you approached the curb of the pavement, most cars would politely slow down to let you cross. The houses are also a clear sign that the people are well off. Given the extreme temperatures, from over 30 in summer till well below –40 in winter, solid architecture is called for. Yet, this solidity doesn't hide the fact that the majority of the buildings are modern and comfortable.

Much money is also spent on large television screens, that popular toy of modern man. You not only find them inside (as in my hotel, where I had breakfast next to a larger-than-life Cher booming out her greatest hits) but also outside in shopping streets, showing commercials or impressions from the Olympiad. With temperatures hovering around zero there were not many locals that paid attention to these screens and one can only wonder what their function is in winter.

Which leads to the inevitable question: is it a good idea to have a chess Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk? From a local point of view there seem to be few objections. The town craves international attention and there is an amazing number of well-equipped sports halls, conference centres and theatres that can host such a large-scale event. The Ugra Tennis Centre, where the games were played, was probably just one of the options.

Hotel accommodation proved trickier, particularly as the organizers, relying on information supplied by FIDE, were expecting fewer guests than actually came. Till the very last moment there were worries about the hotel capacity in Khanty-Mansiysk, but once the Olimpiyskaya hotel was finished and all players, delegates and journalists had been lodged, few complaints were heard.

Russia (silver), Ukraine (gold) and Israel (bronze), receive their medals at the closing ceremony in the ice-hockey stadium of Khanty-Mansiysk.

Khanty-Mansiysk, founded in 1930 as a work settlement, is a Siberian town with about 70,000 inhabitants. Given its isolation (the next towns are 500 or 600 kilometres away, Moscow is a 2100-kilometre flight) it is tempting to continue to call it a work settlement, but the town is too affluent and booming for that. Thanks to an abundance of oil, Ugra, the autonomous region of which Khanty-Mansiysk is the administrative centre, accounts for between two and three per cent of Russia's gross domestic product (GDP). That may sound modest, but once you think about the size

However, this lack of complaints may be partly due to the immense relief of many participants that they had made it to Khanty-Mansiysk at all. In the weeks before the Olympiad many participants lived in uncertainty. The rumours about the lack of hotel rooms had persisted and the schedules of the charters leaving for Siberia from various European airports were changed countless times, creating great discomfort and considerable problems for many travellers.

Maybe that's one reason why it's not such a good idea to have the Olympiad in an out-of-the-way place like Khanty-Mansiysk:

it's so far away from the inhabited world that for most participants it's way too complicated to get there. And quite expensive too, if your tickets are not being paid for by FIDE in exchange for a vote.

But as said, once you're on board of the plane to your final destination (which you had almost stopped believing you would ever see) and once you arrive in your hotel (of which you were completely unsure that it even existed) you take a lot for granted, so there was good reason to take the first positive stories that appeared on the Web at the start of the Olympiad with several grains of salt.

As the Olympiad got underway, more and more initial worries were taken away. The first days the connection to the Internet was shaky, but in the next few days both capacity and stability were greatly improved. Suddenly Internet access was even offered for free in all hotels and at the venue. Unfortunately, this didn't mean that the teams that had already bought Internet cards for the entire event were reimbursed. The quality of the connection varied greatly. In some hotels it was excellent (as I was told), in others slow and unsteady. In the press room it was mostly fine (although never superb), but there were also moments when there was no connection at all.

By the time I arrived in Khanty-Mansiysk, one week before the end, most participants I spoke to expressed the view that 'in fact this Olympiad is quite good', giving special praise to the excellent shuttle service between the venue and the various hotels. On the other hand, there were regular complaints about the quality of the food. Still, the prevailing feeling was that all the people in Khanty-Mansiysk were immensely kind and helpful. This was certainly true, but not all of those kind and helpful young men and women came from Khanty-Mansiysk. Some 350 volunteers were brought in from other places (including Moscow and Kalmykia), as were no fewer than 800 police officers to guarantee safety and security.

Encouraged by the increasingly positive reactions from the participants, the FIDE representatives even began to call this 39th edition the best Olympiad ever. That was a very kind compliment to all the people involved, but it was also a claim that begs for a reaction. Even if we forget about the chaos around the charters and the hotels, which must have led to countless sleepless nights, it was rather weird to hear this Olympiad constantly described as much better than, for instance, Dresden or Turin. Perhaps, as I cannot speak for others, I should give a brief comparison based on my own experiences.

Although I had sent in my accreditation form and request for a hotel (this was an act of trust, as no prices were mentioned on their site) many weeks before the start of the Olympiad, I only knew that I was actually going there four days before I was to fly to Moscow and from there on to Khanty-Mansiysk. As my mails were never answered, I had finally sent an email to practically all the addresses I could find at the official website, imploring them to at least send me an answer. This answer I received from the personal account of the press chief, who assured me that everything was fine: my hotel had been booked and I would be met at the airport. She also explained that they had answered my previous mails, but that for some reasons these messages from the official Olympiad accounts had not been delivered. Of course I was very grateful for her help, and I, too, immediately felt a lot better about this Olympiad!

NEW IN CHESS

The 39th Olympiad ended as it had begun, with a spectacular show of a standard rarely seen at chess events.

The hotel where I was staying was simple but decent. The room was basic and clean and I was happy with the desk to work at. Still, this room could in no way compete with the five-star hotel I had had in Dresden for about the same price. Nor could the food, which was quite reasonable as well, compare with the food in

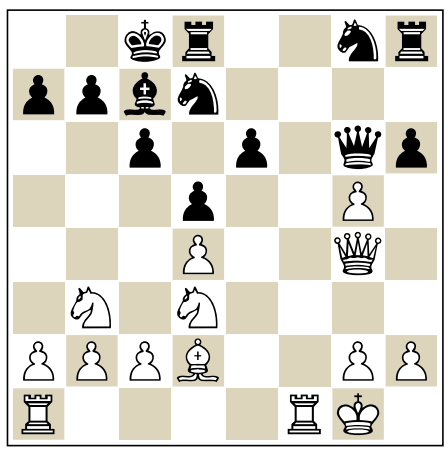
Dresden (where in the hotel I only had breakfast from the lavish buffet). And how did Khanty-Mansiysk itself compare with Dresden or Turin? Dresden, where in the morning you could go to the fabulous museums and on a free night to the Semper Opera! Turin, where you could go for walks in the splendid old centre and have a magnificent coffee on one of the piazza's basking in the sunshine! Well, in Khanty-Mansiysk you had to muster courage to go for a walk with temperatures around zero and rain pouring down almost incessantly while I was there. And where should you walk to with the only cultural point of interest being the Russian Orthodox Church at the other end of the centre? One further aspect badly missed in Khanty-Mansiysk was a place where in the evening you were bound to meet players, journalists or delegates. A restaurant, bar or hotel that becomes the social centre of the event, as always happened at the other Olympiads I have been to. Now you largely depended on chance to meet old friends and acquaintances. In the days after the Olympiad I kept sending and receiving emails about missed meetings.

One final word about the opening and closing ceremonies in Khanty-Mansiysk. They were splendid, rightly praised and certainly of a standard that is rarely seen at chess events. Still, one could only shake one's head in disbelief when Kirsan Ilyumzhinov publicly stated that the opening ceremony was at a level comparable to the ceremonies at the Olympic Games in Beijing. But then, what should one think of the judgement of a man who on the eve of the Olympiad once again made our sport the laughing stock of the world at large when he told *The Independent* that chess was brought to us from outer space?

NEW IN CHESS

Magnus Carlsen had a rough time, losing three games, but the Norwegian remained a cheerful ambassador for the Tromsø Olympiad in 2014.

So what about the chess in Khanty-Mansiysk? The chess was great! Which might have been expected with virtually everyone of importance being present. In fact, the only grandmaster from the world's top 25 not to appear was World Champion Vishy Anand. The Olympiad has never been his favourite tournament and with the Bilbao Final Masters and the Nanjing super-tournament ahead of him, Anand's absence had been expected. The world's number one, Magnus Carlsen, did come to Khanty-Mansiysk. Carlsen faced the same program as Anand, but he happens to like the camaraderie of Olympiads and decided to lead the Norwegian team, even though he must have realized that he might shed some rating points. That was a calculated risk, but he certainly cannot have expected to lose so many. In his black games Carlsen proved so vulnerable that he lost three games, against Jobava, Adams and Sjugirov. As White he did much better, but the total damage was 15 points. Perhaps the opening choices in his black games were too experimental. Against Adams he tried 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.e5 ♘h5 (and felt he got a reasonable position until he underestimated White's attack in the middlegame) and against Sjugirov he stumbled rather early in a slightly unusual Caro-Kann.



Sjugirov-Carlsen
position after 18.fxg5

The opening has not been a big success for Black. Now he should recapture, 18...hxg5, when White is better. Instead, Black blunders: **18...♘gf6? 19.♖xf6! ♗xh2+ 20.♔h1 ♘xf6 21.♕xe6+ ♔b8 22.gxf6 ♗c7 23.♘e5 ♕xc2 24.f7 ♖hf8 25.♗b4** Black resigned.

Seventeen-year-old Sanan Sjugirov, the greatest talent to emerge from Elista since Ernesto Inarkiev, played on Board 1 of Russia 4. In total Russia had five teams competing, an unprecedented number that cannot reasonably be defended by the rules. Besides Rus-

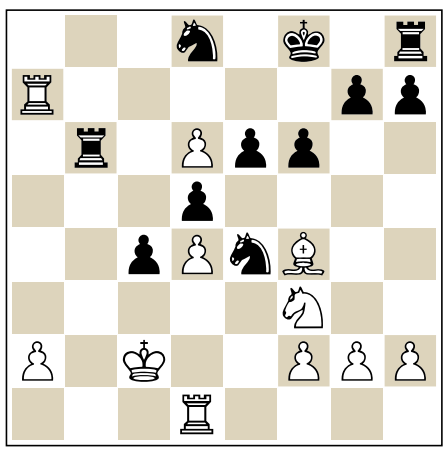
sia 1, led by Kramnik, there was the 'junior' Russia 2, led by Ian Nepomniachtchi. Russia 3, with first board Dmitry Yakovenko, was a mix of youth and experience and Russia 4 and 5 consisted of players from the Ugra region, strengthened by players like Sjugirov. At the start of the Olympiad various team captains protested against the high number of Russian teams. Their protest was rejected with the words that this had been the decision of the FIDE president. Previously, it has been common practice that the home country fields two teams, and sometimes even three teams have been allowed if this made the total number of teams even. Five teams is hard to explain. Perhaps their presence would have been less offensive if they had called the last two teams Ugra 1 and 2.

Russia 1 were the clear favourites for gold. With Kramnik, Grischuk, Svidler, Karjakin and Malakhov their average rating was an astonishing 2755. On top of that, they were playing on home-turf and could look forward to a bonus of €50,000 each if they finally repeated the success of Garry Kasparov and his men, who brought Russia the Hamilton Russell Cup in 2002 at the Olympiad in Bled. In that Olympiad Russia won despite a loss in their match against Hungary. In Khanty-Mansiysk they also lost to Hungary, in Round 5 (Leko-Grischuk 1-0, and three draws), but this time they could not overcome this handicap. In the remaining rounds Russia 1 won their matches against the Czech Republic, Russia 2, reigning champions Armenia and third seed China, but they got no further than 2-2 in the crucial matches against Ukraine and Spain.

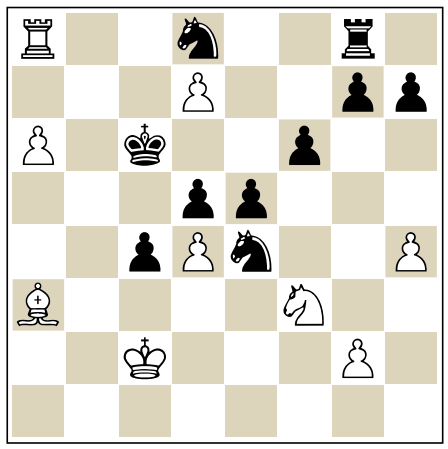
The match against Ukraine in Round 8 was a cliff-hanger that should have earned Zahar Efimenko a statue in bronze. Two games were drawn, Kramnik-Ivanchuk and Ponomariov-Svidler, while Sergey Karjakin gave his new country the lead against his old country with a wondrous win over Pavel Eljanov.

CK 4.11 – B12
Sergey Karjakin
Pavel Eljanov
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (8)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2 c5 6.♗e3 ♕b6 7.♘c3 ♕xb2 8.♕b1 ♕xb1+ 9.♖xb1 c4 10.♖xb7 ♘c6 11.♘b5 ♘d8 12.♖c7 ♖b8 13.♘d6+ ♗xd6 14.exd6 ♖b1+ 15.♗d1 ♗xc2 16.♔d2 ♗xd1 17.♖xd1 ♖b6 18.♗f4 ♘f6 19.♖e7+ ♔f8 20.♖xa7 ♘e4+ 21.♔c2 f6



This position Karjakin had studied in a training session with Alexander Motylev, Yury Dokhoian and the Kosintseva sisters Tatiana and Nadezhda. The previous moves had all been suggested by Tatiana. **22.h4!** And this one was also her suggestion, a very important move preventing Black from playing ...g5. As Karjakin said, 'The computer doesn't immediately understand that the situation is very bad for Black, but it soon becomes clear.' He thanked Tatiana for her help and was still wondering where exactly Eljanov had gone wrong. **22...♘xf2 23.♖b1 ♖xb1 24.♔xb1 ♘e4 25.a4 ♖g8 26.a5 ♘c6 27.♖a6 ♘b8 28.♖a7 ♘c6 29.d7 ♘d8 30.♔c2 ♔e7 31.a6 e5 32.♗c1 ♔d6 33.♗a3+ ♔c6 34.♖a8**



Black resigned.

Karjakin was in great form in Khanty-Mansiysk, and with 8 out of 10 and a performance rating of 2859 he won the gold medal on Board 4. The big question was whether his win would be enough to secure overall victory against his former fellow-countrymen. The Russians had high hopes, as Malakhov was only slightly worse against Efimenko, but in an admirable effort the young Ukrainian managed to win his game and keep the Ukrainian chances of winning the Olympiad alive. The game against Malakhov, with Efimenko's notes, you will find further on.

Efimenko was one of the pillars of the Ukrainian team, and his score of 8½ out of 11 (TPR 2783) won him the silver medal on Board 4. Another pillar was Pavel Eljanov, who won silver on third board (7/10, TPR 2737) and also annotated his best game from Khanty-Mansiysk.

But the undisputed star of the Ukrainian team was Vasily Ivanchuk, who started with 6 wins in his first 6 games and won the gold medal on first board with 8/10 and a 2890 performance. Under his inspired leadership the Ukrainians managed to stay ahead of the Russians, with wins over Azerbaijan (2½-1½) and France (3½-½) in Rounds 9 and 10.

At the start of the last round

Ukraine had 18 match points, against 17 for Russia and 16 for Israel. The pairings were Russia-Spain and Israel-Ukraine. Although Ukraine was leading, Russia still had good chances, as in case of a tie in match points the tie-break would favour them. The Ukrainians knew that they had to win or have a result that was no less than Russia's to claim gold. At first things seemed to be going fine for Russia, as they quickly made draws in their two black games, while in Israel-Ukraine the first two boards were also drawn. The key game proved to be the one on Board 3 between Svidler and Salgado. Before the match not only the Russians must have thought that this was a game in which the top-seeds should strike. Reality was different. Svidler got little or nothing out of the opening, and once Black took over the initiative it was clear that White had to fight for his life. The end came remarkably quickly. After 36 moves White resigned and Russia's hopes were blown to pieces. A draw was the most they could get from their match (and that's what they did, as Kramnik beat Shirov) and this was considerably more than the booty waiting for the winners.

Standing behind Pavel Eljanov and Ruslan Ponomariov, captain Vladimir Tukmakov watches the first moves of the Ukrainian team in the last round. France's Laurent Fressinet is also interested.

Israel won the bronze medals. Their team had undergone several changes compared to the silver medallists from Dresden, but once again they finished among the very best, even if they were only seeded 11th. Their big man was Emil Sutovsky, who won the gold medal on Board 2 with 6½ out of 8 and the highest performance of the entire Olympiad, 2895. About a year ago there was a rumour that Sutovsky was thinking of giving up professional chess. When I asked him about this rumour, he said that he had once had an offer to do something in another field, as he had been 'quite a decent student in economics', but that he never even came close to taking such a decision and that 'the rumours about his demise had been greatly exaggerated'. Sutovsky also contributes to our analysis section further on. We had expected that he would choose the flashy win against his friend Gata Kamsky. Instead, he chose to do 'his best game'.

Ukraine's victory was fully deserved. In 2004 the young Ukrainian team surprised each and everyone (including themselves) when they swept the field in Calvia. This time they could rely on many years of experience. In 2004, their captain Tukmakov felt that he still had a lot to learn; now he is like a father to the team members and understands every move that they make on and off the board. He follows them wherever they play and if he believes it is called for he gets in touch with them. The departure of a player of Karjakin's level must have hurt, but instead of whining about his absence, his former team mates showed what they are worth themselves. And the Ukrainian chess federation seems to have changed too. The years of conflict appear to be over, as can be seen from Ponomariov's return to the team. Typically, the Ukrainian team was the only team that presented themselves in Khanty-Mansiysk with a beautifully produced brochure written by Olena Boytsun that presented the players and talked about the ambitions of the new president of their federation, Viktor Kapustin.

And then, of course, there was Vasily Ivanchuk, who at 41 remains as devoted to chess as ever. Or in the words of Tukmakov: 'Saying that he loves chess is not the right word. He lives in chess. He lives in chess 24 hours per day, 365 days a year. He has chess dreams and he thinks about chess all the time. Outside of chess he is also a very interesting and unorthodox person, but in chess I believe he is a real genius.'

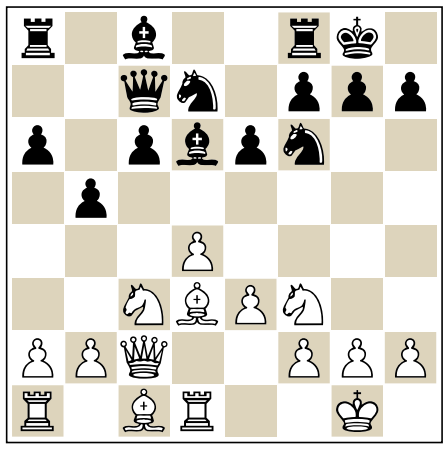
NOTES BY

Vasily Ivanchuk

SL 8.4 – D45
Vasily Ivanchuk
Peter Leko
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (6)

At this point three teams were sharing first place: Georgia, Hungary and Armenia. Our team was a point behind. Therefore we needed to win.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 c6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♕c2 ♗d6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 dxc4 9.♗xc4 a6 10.♖d1 b5 11.♗d3 ♕c7

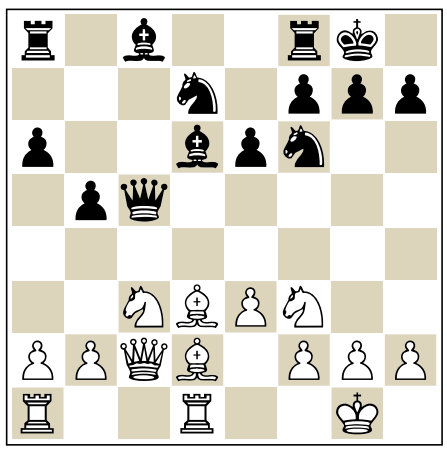


12.♗d2

Also quite possible is 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♗xe4 ♘f6 14.♗d3 h6 15.e4 ♗e7 16.e5 ♘d5 17.♕e2 with a white edge, as in Banikas-Nybäck, ICC 2009, but I think that Black's play can be improved.

12...c5 13.dxc5 ♕xc5

13...♘xc5 is bad in view of 14.♗xb5!. White is looking for an opportunity to put pressure on Black's position.

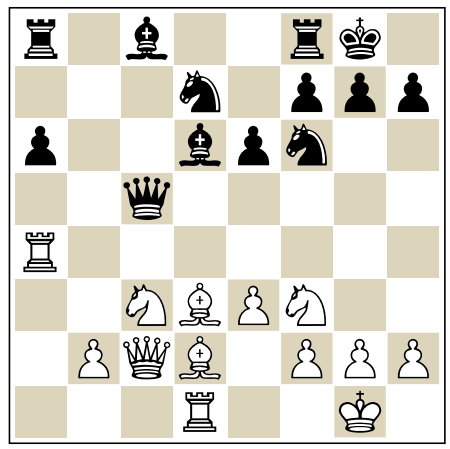


14.a4

The game Jussupow-Stellwagen, Amsterdam 2008, lasted only two more moves: 14.♘e4 ♕xc2 15.♗xc2 and a draw was agreed.

14...bxa4 15.♖xa4

15.♕xa4 was also considered, but after 15...♗b7 16.♘e4 ♘xe4 17.♗xe4 ♘b6! 18.♕b4 ♕xb4 19.♗xb4 ♗xe4 too many pieces would have been exchanged.

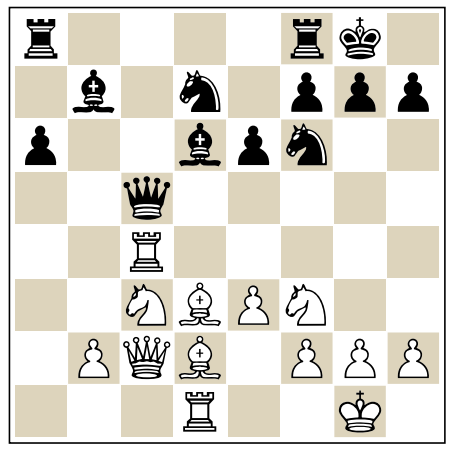


15...♗b7

15...♘b6 would have been met by the unexpected 16.♖h4! h6 17.♖c1 ♗b7 (17...♗e7 18.e4!) 18.♕d1!, when the black queen is in danger! After 18...♘bd7 19.♘e4 White would have developed dangerous activity.

16.♖c4

The rook drives the black queen to an uncomfortable position.

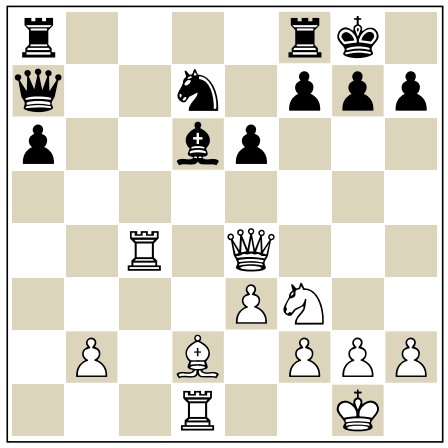


16...♕a7?!

The critical position would have arisen after 16...♗xf3!? 17.♖xc5 ♗xd1 18.♘xd1 ♘xc5 19.♗e2, when Black has two rooks for the queen. How should this position be assessed? I think that the chances are roughly equal. White has the two bishops and will try to break up the black king's position, while Black will press on the c- and b-files.

17.♘e4 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗xe4 19.♕xe4

Now White develops some definite pressure on Black's position.



19...♖ac8?!

A serious error; the queen on a7 should not have been left undefended.

Hardly an improvement is 19...♘f6 20.♕c2 ♕b7 (or 20...♕b8 21.♗a5 ♖e8 22.h3 h6 23.♘d4) 21.e4 with a clear advantage for White.

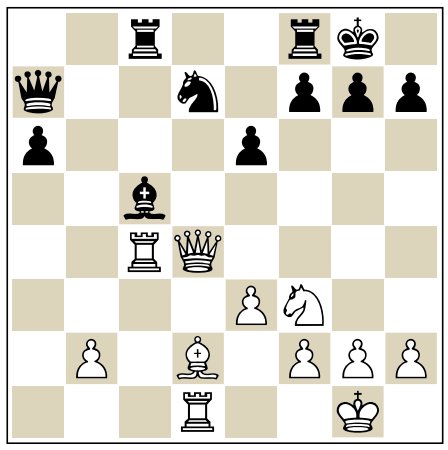
However, 19...♖fc8! was correct: 20.♖dc1 ♖c5 21.♗c3 ♖xc4 22.♕xc4 ♕c5 23.♕e4 ♖d8, retaining a perfectly defensible position.

20.♕d4

Immediately exploiting Black's error. At the required time his pieces are uncoordinated.

20...♗c5

The alternative 20...♗b8 would have led to an inferior endgame after 21.♗b4 ♕xd4 22.♖cxd4 ♘c5 23.g3 (23.♖c4 ♘b7!) 23...♖fe8 24.♔g2 ♘b7 25.♖d7 ♘c5 26.♗xc5 ♖xc5 27.♖b7.



NEW IN CHESS

Still absorbed in thought after the game he has just finished, Vasily Ivanchuk, the star of the Olympiad, patiently poses for a photo with a young fan.

21.♕c3!

The series of unhurried moves by the white queen would appear to have dulled Black's vigilance. White imperceptibly improves the placing of his pieces, and unexpectedly Black finds himself in difficulties.

21...♖cd8

Nothing was given by 21...♖c7 22.♗e1 ♘f6 23.b4 ♗b6 24.♖xc7 ♕xc7 25.♕xc7 ♗xc7 26.♖c1.

22.♕c2

White is not in a hurry to create threats.

22...♖fe8

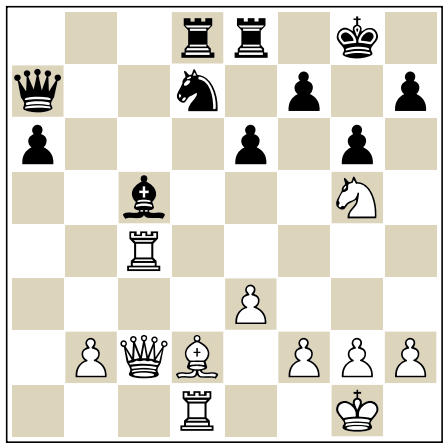
After 22...♗b6 23.♗c3 ♖fe8 24.b4 White retains the advantage.

Weak was 22...h6 23.♗c3 ♗e7 24.♗xg7 ♔xg7 25.♖c7.

23.♘g5

Now additional weaknesses are created in Black's position.

23...g6



24.♗a5

Also strong was 24.♗e1! ♗b6 25.♘e4 ♔g7 26.♘d6 ♖f8 27.♗b4, when Black is helpless.

24...♗b6 25.♗c3 e5

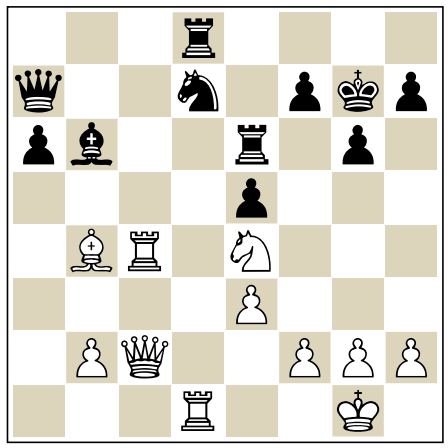
It did not help to play 25...f6 26.♘e4 f5 27.♘d6 ♖f8 28.♕b3 ♘c5 29.♖xc5 ♗xc5 30.♕xe6+ ♖f7 31.♕e5 and Black is in trouble.

26.♘e4

Now the white knight occupies a dominating position.

26...♖e6 27.♗b4 ♔g7

Black has no useful moves. He has his back to the wall, as can be seen, for example, from 27...♕b7 28.♗d6 ♘f8 29.h4.



28.♖c6!

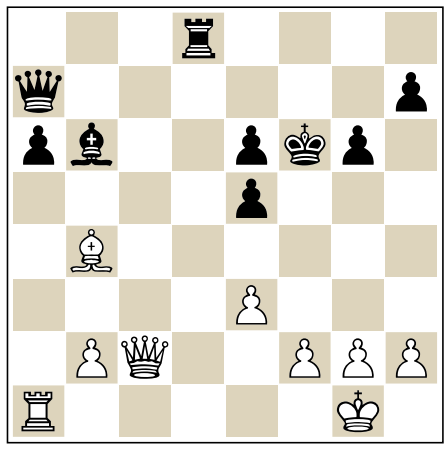
Exploiting the insecure placing of the black pieces.

28...♘f6

Not 28...♖xc6? 29.♕xc6 and wins.

29.♖xe6 fxe6 30.♘xf6 ♔xf6 31.♖a1

It was also good to exchange: 31.♖xd8 ♗xd8 32.♕e4 ♔f7 33.♗d6 (or 33.♕xe5 ♕d7 34.♕f4+ ♗f6 35.h4) 33...♗f6 34.♕c6, and Black has problems.



31...♕b7?!

Black is worn out by the constant threats. The best try was 31...a5 32.♗c3 ♕d7 (d5 is an ideal position for the queen) 33.h3 ♕d5 34.♕a4 ♔g7, and Black is centralized.

32.♗c3 a5 33.♕a4

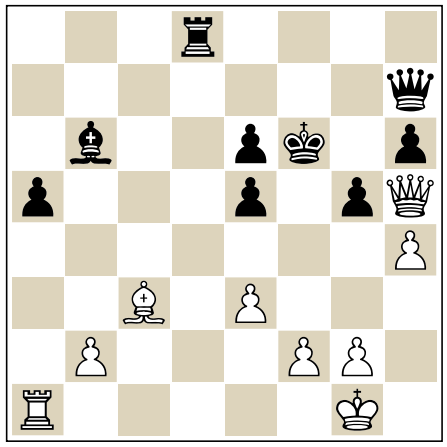
But now Black is too late.

33...g5

Black cracks under the pressure. After 33...♕d5 34.♕f4+ ♔e7 35.♕h4+ ♔f8 36.♕f6+ ♔g8 37.

h4, I think that White must win, since there is nothing that Black can move.

34.h4 h6 35.♕g4 ♕h7 36.♕h5



36...♕g6?

This hastens the end. Better was 36...♖g8 37.hxg5+ ♖xg5 38.♕h3 h5 39.f4 ♖g4 40.♗xe5+ ♔e7 41.♖e1, and White would still have faced some technical difficulties.

37.♗xe5+ ♔f7 38.♕f3+ ♔g8 39.♕c6

Black resigned.

A complete game with opportunities for play from both sides of the board.

NEW IN CHESS

Pavel Eljanov, one of the pillars of the Ukrainian team, won silver on Board 3, with a 7 out of 9 score and a 2737 performance.

NOTES BY

Pavel Eljanov

QG 8.2 – D26

Pavel Eljanov

Vladimir Tkachiev

Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (10)

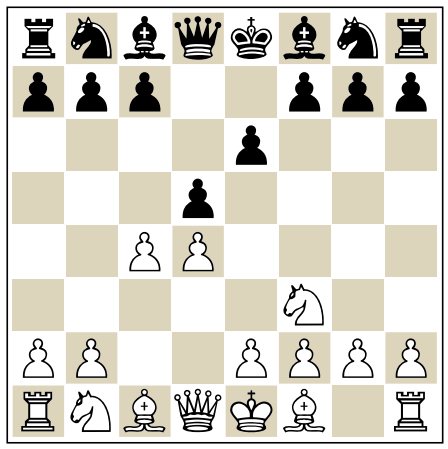
It is no longer a secret to anyone that in modern chess the term 'opening preparation' is hopelessly out of date and does not correspond to the objective picture. The analyses of some opening variations, not only by leading players but also by ordinary amateurs (with the required diligence and technical equipment) extend deep into the endgame, by-passing the middlegame. It is quite obvious that few relish the fate of being trapped in a net of computer variations, from which sometimes it is not possible to escape. Therefore many players prefer to deviate from the main lines, to take the opponent away from his preparation as soon as possible. In this light the following game seems to me to be quite interesting. The initial moves, at first sight in no way noteworthy, have a definite implication.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6!?

The first surprise. Vlad's main opening is the Slav, and usually he straightforwardly plays 2...c6. The move in the game leaves open the question of the name of the opening – various transformations are possible.

3.♘f3

In this position I have also played 3.♘c3. Possibly Vlad was nevertheless intending to take the play along Slav lines with 3...c6. I last played the critical gambit line 4.e4 (as well as 4.♘f3) at about the age of 13, while 4.e3 ♘f6 takes play into the Meran Variation and allows Black to avoid lines such as 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 or 5.g3!?.



3...dxc4!?

But this was the main surprise! To judge by my Megabase, Vlad became disillusioned with the Queen's Gambit Accepted roughly at the end of 2002 and nowadays he employs it only sporadically. In

fact, his choice has a clear and logical explanation: in recent times, in reply to the 'Accepted', I have been playing the variation with e4 (1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4). As regards 4.e4 in this position, it would appear that Black has a normal game after 4... b5!. Incidentally, the previous occasion when the position after 3...dxc4 occurred with me was in a game with the chief improviser of modern chess – Vasily Ivanchuk (Jermuk 2009). Vasily has the ability, like no one else, to deflect an opponent from his preparation – believe me! If anyone doesn't believe this, I advise them to study a couple of his recent games from the Olympiad: with Beliavsky and Sokolov.

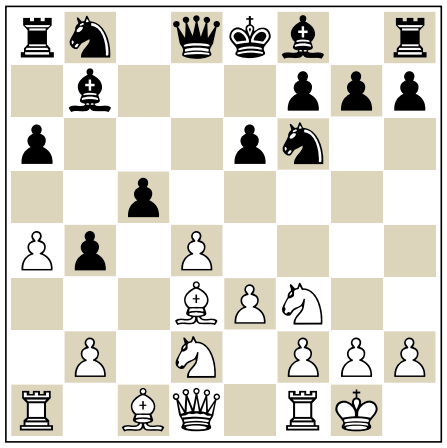
4.e3 ♘f6 5.♗xc4 a6 6.0-0 b5

A rather rare variation.

7.♗d3

I remembered that somewhere I had seen/heard that it was best to retreat the bishop to d3 and then advance e4. At that, unfortunately/fortunately, my knowledge came to an end.

7...♗b7 8.a4 b4 9.♘bd2 c5



10.♕e2

It is very difficult to give any specific evaluations of individual moves – the position is a fresh one, although quite typical.

10.e4 is the most logical, but I was concerned that the black knight would retreat to d7 followed by ...♗d5 – 10...cxd4 11.e5 ♘fd7 12.♘b3 (12.♘c4 ♘c5) 12...♗d5!?. My computer does not like this move, but how White is to claim an advantage after 13.♘bxd4 ♘c5 14.♗e2 (14.♗g5 ♕d7 15.♗c2 ♘c6) 14...♘bd7 it does not know.

10...♘bd7

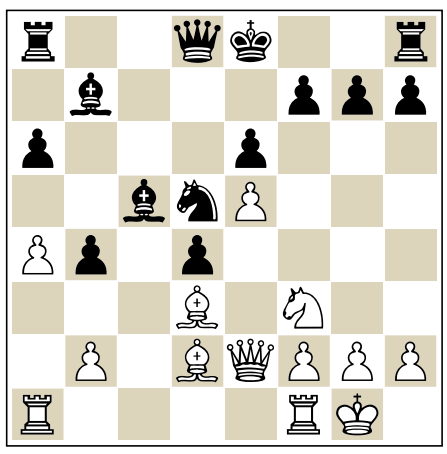
The position after 10...cxd4 11.exd4 ♗e7 12.♘b3!? suited me, although I am not sure that White can hope for anything serious.

11.e4 cxd4 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♘b3!

I was happy, both with the position and with the fact that Vlad began thinking for a long time.

13...♘c5 14.♘xc5 ♗xc5 15.♗d2

Here I also spent quite a lot of time, although what I was thinking about I don't understand. Nothing is given by 15.♘g5 ♗e7 16.♕h5 g6 17.♕h6 ♗f8 18.♕h3 ♗e7.



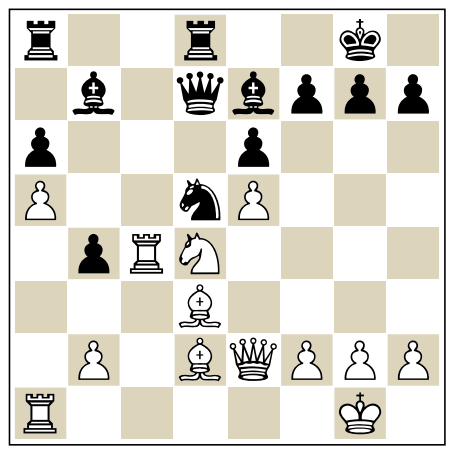
15...♗e7

I was rather concerned about the piece sacrifice 15...♘c3!?. In such positions, where one side is aiming to attack and is methodically bringing up his reserves, a sharp change of course can be extremely unpleasant! Nevertheless, White should be better, but I am not sure that I would have liked such changes! After 15...♘c3!? play might continue 16.bxc3 dxc3 17.♗e3 (17.♗f4 b3) 17...♕c7 18.♗c2 ♗xe3 (18...♗d5!?) 19.fxe3! h6 (19...0-0? 20.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 21.♘g5+ and wins) 20.a5 with a white plus.

16.♖fc1

A move aiming for a small plus. I think that greater practical problems would have been posed by 16.♕e4!? ♕d7 17.♕g4 g6 18.♗h6, with a long-term initiative.

16...0-0 17.♘xd4 ♕d7 18.a5 ♖fd8 19.♖c4



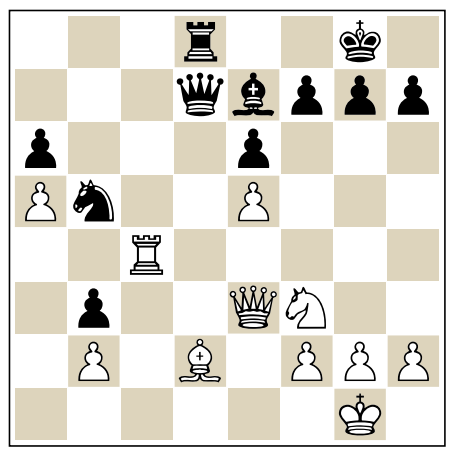
19...♘c7

Interesting was 19...♖ac8!? 20.♖xc8 ♗xc8 21.♘f3 ♘c3! 22.bxc3 bxc3 23.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 24.♗xc3 ♕d3 with adequate compensation.

20.♗e4

Bad is 20.♗xb4? ♗xb4 21.♖xb4 ♘d5 and Black is better.

20...♗xe4 21.♕xe4 ♘b5 22.♘f3 b3 23.♖ac1 ♖ac8 24.♕e3 ♖xc4 25.♖xc4



25...h6?

Up to this point Vlad had played slowly but well, and the evaluation of the position had not gone beyond the bounds of 'White has slight pressure'. Black had two worthy continuations.

The most obvious was 25...♕d3!? 26.♕xd3 ♖xd3 27.♖c8+! (in my preliminary calculations I had been intending 27.♔f1 h6 28.♔e2 ♖d5 but here it is not apparent how White can successfully regroup his forces – the ♗a3 resource does not allow him to calmly develop his plans: 29.♖c6 ♗a3!) 27...♖d8 28.♖c6 ♖a8!

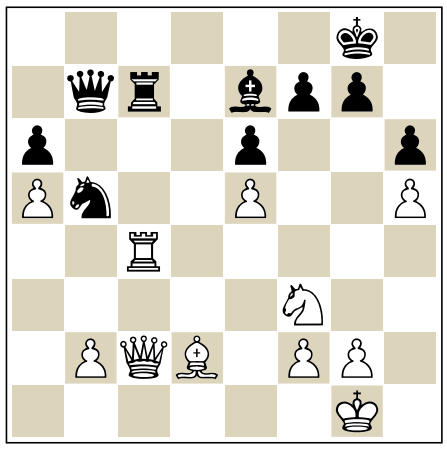
29.♔f1 ♗a3! 30.♗c1 ♗b4 31.♘d2 ♗xa5 32.♘xb3 ♗c7 33.f4 and again White retains some pressure, but Black should be able to hold the position.

There is also the more complicated 25...♕d5!? 26.♕xb3 ♗c5 27.♕c2 ♘d4 28.♘xd4 ♗xd4, which would appear to solve all Black's problems, but here too White retains a minimal initiative with 29.♖c8! h6 30.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 31.b4 ♗xe5 32.♗e1! (32.♗e3 ♕d5) and, strangely enough, Black has to be very careful – the b5 breakthrough is on the agenda and in some cases the a-pawn may cost him his bishop: 32...♕d7 33.♕e2 ♕d6 34.g3 with the initiative for White.

26.♕xb3

Now the game enters the technical phase – Black has no compensation at all.

26...♕b7 27.♕c2 ♖d7 28.h4 ♖c7 29.h5

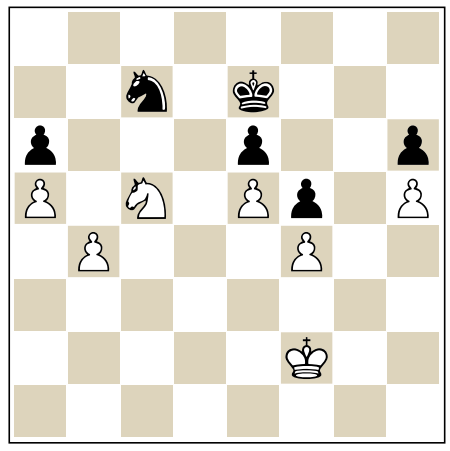


My moves hardly deserve any particular approval – when the opponent has no counterplay, it is very easy and pleasant to strengthen the position.

29...♗d8 30.♖xc7 ♗xc7 31.♕c4 ♗d8 32.♘e1! ♕d7 33.♘d3 ♗e7 34.♗e3 ♕b7 35.♗b6 ♕d7 36.b4 ♕b7 37.f3 ♘a3 38.♕c7!

Now, when everything is ideally placed, White can go into the endgame!

38...♕xc7 39.♗xc7 ♔f8 40.♗d6 ♘b5 41.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 42.♘c5 ♘c7 43.♔f2 g6 44.g4 gxh5 45.gxh5 f6 46.f4 f5



47.♔f3 There are various ways to win; there is also the forcing line 47.b5 axb5 (47...♘xb5 48.♘xa6) 48.a6 b4 49.a7, and Black is powerless.

47...♔d8 48.♔e2 ♘d5

Otherwise after ♔d3-c4 and ♘d3 my king penetrates into Black's position.

49.♘xe6+ ♔e7 50.♘d4 ♘xf4+ 51.♔f3 ♘d5 52.b5 axb5 53.a6 ♘c7 54.a7 b4 55.♔f4

Black resigned.

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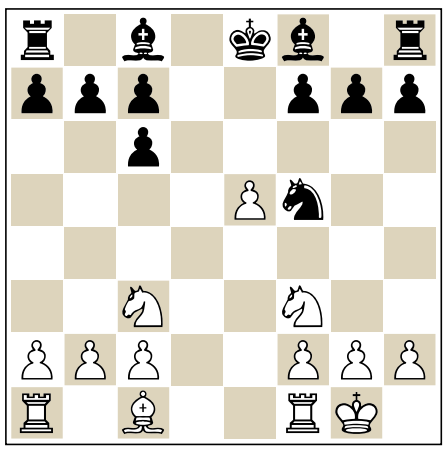
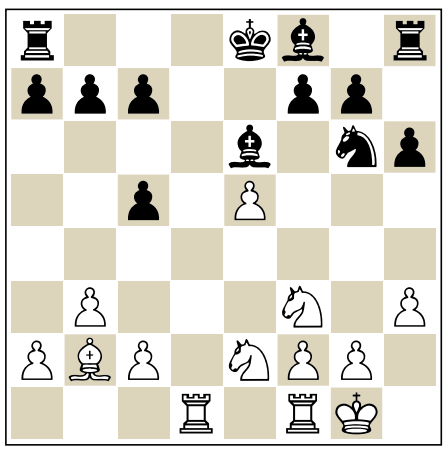
NOTES BY
Zahar Efimenko

RL 7.4 – C67
Zahar Efimenko
Vladimir Malakhov
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (8)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6
So, the Berlin Variation of the Ruy Lopez, which has been very popular of late. Of course, I had mainly prepared for the Rio de Janeiro Variation 5...♗e7 6.♕e2 ♘d6 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.dxe5 ♘b7, which in recent times Vladimir has regularly employed. But I also devoted a little time to preparations for the Berlin Wall.
6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.♘c3 ♔e8



10.♘e2
I decided to choose this rare continuation, since in recent times Black has achieved good results in the main lines after 10.h3.
10...♘e7 11.h3 ♘g6 12.b3 h6 13.♗b2 c5 14.♖ad1 ♗e6

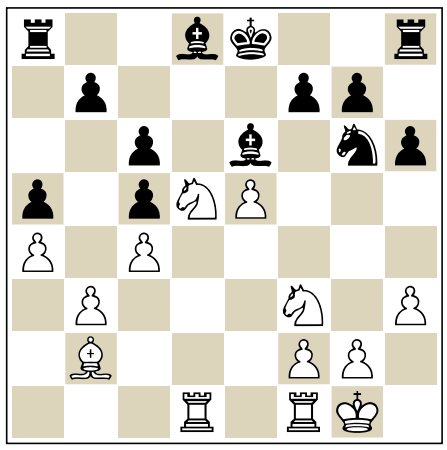


15.♘c3

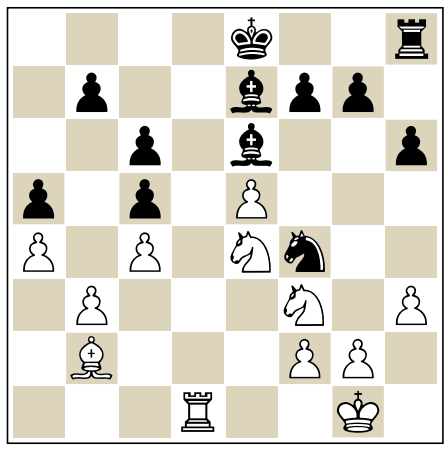
NEW IN CHESS

Zahar Efimenko kept Ukraine in the race for gold with a badly needed win against Vladimir Malakhov in the key clash with Russia 1.

Interesting is 15.♘h2!? ♗e7 16.f4 ♘h4 17.g4 g6 18.♘c3 with a slight advantage for White.
15...♗e7
White is clearly better after 15...c6 16.♘e4 ♖d8 17.♘fd2 ♗e7 18.f4 ♘h4 19.g4.
16.♘d5 ♗d8 17.c4 a5 18.a4 c6



19.♘c3
Worth trying was 19.♘e3!? ♗c7 20.♘d2! (when calculating the variation with the knight to e3, I did not see this strong manoeuvre) 20...♘xe5 21.♘e4 f6 22.♘xc5 with a white advantage.
19...♗e7 20.♘e4 ♖d8 21.♖fe1 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 ♘f4



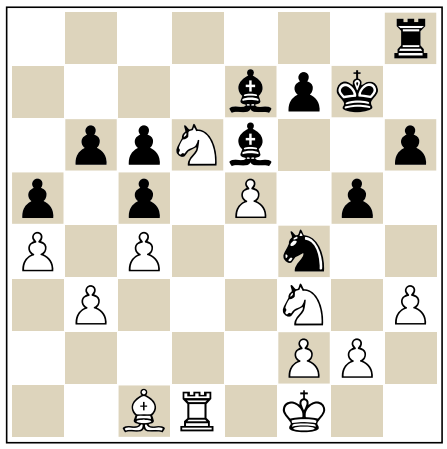
23.♗a3!?
Here I thought for a long time. At this moment it became clear that Sergey Karjakin, playing for Russia, had completely caught Pavel Eljanov in his opening preparation. Things were bad for us! Therefore I realized that I had to fight and do my utmost to save this very difficult match against the Russian team.
23...b6
I spent most of my time looking at 23...♗f5!? when White's best try is probably 24.♘d6+!? ♗xd6 25.exd6 ♘d3 26.g4 ♗h7 27.♖d2 b6 28.♖e2+ ♔d7 29.♖e7+ ♔xd6

30.♖xf7 ♖g8 31.♘d2 ♘e5 32.♖b7 ♘d7 33.f4 with counterplay.

24.♘d6+ ♔f8 25.♔f1 g5!?

White is slightly better after 25... ♘g6 26.♗b2 ♔g8 27.♘d2 ♔h7 28.♘2e4 ♖f8 29.♖d2.

26.♗c1 ♔g7



27.♗xf4

I thought for a long time about 27.♘h4, but in the end I decided against it, although in the given position it was the best plan: 27... ♗xd6 28.♖xd6 ♘xh3 29.♘f3 g4 30.♘h4 ♘g5 31.♖xc6 ♖d8 32.♔e2 ♖b8 33.♔e3 with a white advantage.

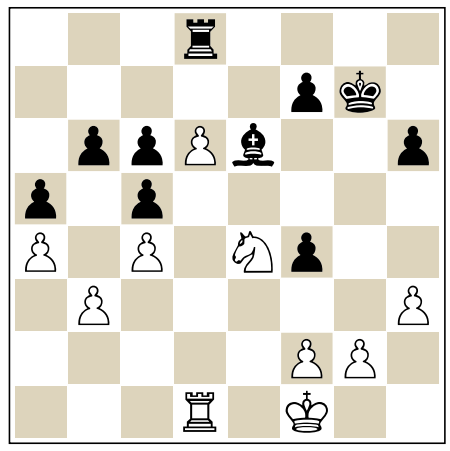
27...gxf4 28.♘d2?!

Stronger was 28.♔e2 ♖d8 29.♘e4 ♖xd1 30.♔xd1 ♗f5 31.♘fd2 with the better chances.

28...♗xd6!

A timely elimination of the strong knight.

29.exd6 ♖d8 30.♘e4



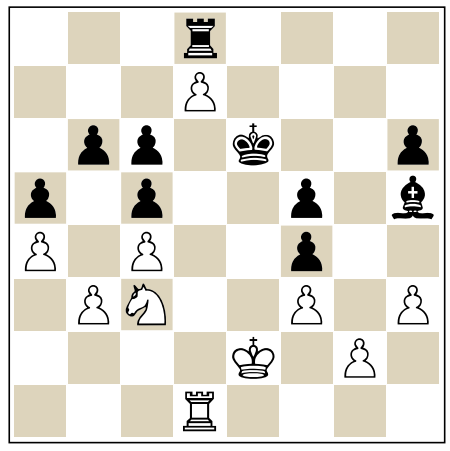
30...f5?

In the time scramble Vladimir commits a serious strategic mistake. After 30...♗f5! 31.f3 f6 32.♔f2 ♔f7 neither player has any potential for strengthening his position, and therefore it is a draw.

31.♘c3 ♔f6 32.♔e2 ♗f7 33.d7 ♗h5+?

Practically the decisive mistake. He should have tried 33...♔e6, although after 34.f3 ♖xd7 35.♖xd7 ♔xd7 36.♔d3 ♔d6 37.♘e2 ♔e5 38.♔c3 ♗e8 39.h4 ♗f7 40.♘c1 White has good winning chances.

34.f3 ♔e6



35.♔e1!

It was this resource that my oppo-

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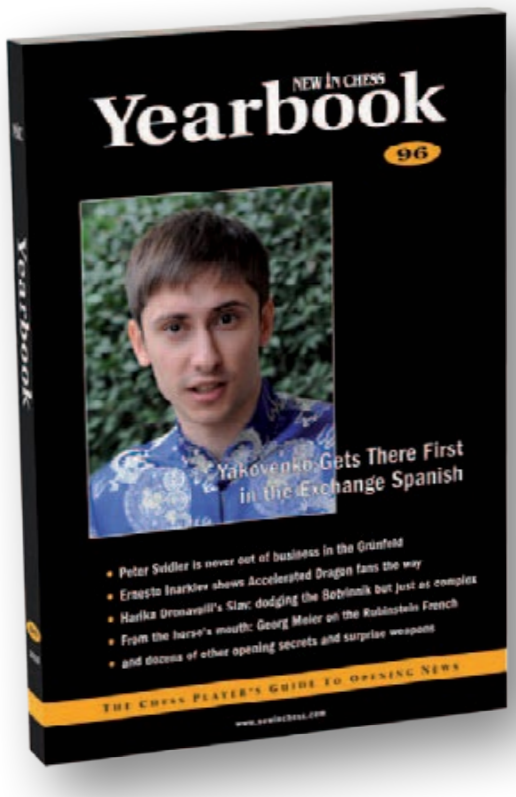
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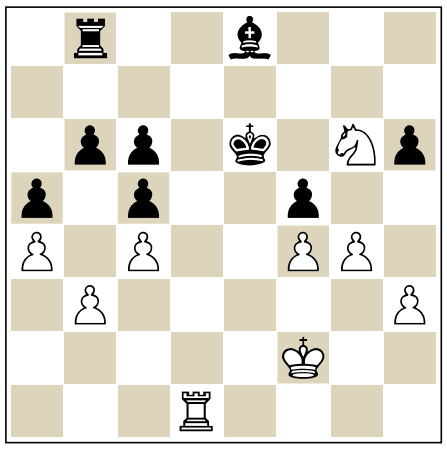
nent overlooked. This was apparent from his reaction and the fact that he spent his remaining minutes thinking about his reply.

35...♗f7 36.♘e2 ♔e5 37.♘c1!

The white knight gradually begins attacking Black's fixed weaknesses. Black's position is already close to being lost.

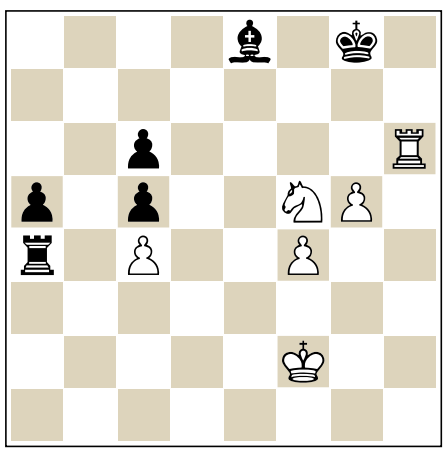
37...♗e6 38.♘d3+ ♔f6 39.♘xf4 ♗xd7 40.♔f2 ♔e7 41.♘g6+ ♔e6 42.f4 ♖b8 43.g4! ♗e8



44.♘h4!

Accurate conversion of the advantage. Now the knight heads for f5, thereby driving the king off the sixth rank and achieving complete domination.

44...fxg4 45.hxg4 b5 46.♘f5 bxa4 47.bxa4 ♖b4 48.♖d6+ ♔f7 49.♖xh6 ♖xa4 50.g5 ♔g8



51.♘d6

More accurate was 51.g6! ♖xc4 52.♔f3 ♖c1 (or 52...♗d7 53.♘e7+ ♔f8 54.♖h7 ♗e6 55.f5 and wins) 53.g7 and White wins.

51...♗f7 52.♘xf7 ♔xf7 53.f5 ♖xc4 54.♔f3 ♖b4 55.♖h7+ ♔g8 56.g6

Black resigned.

KHANTY-MANSIYSK

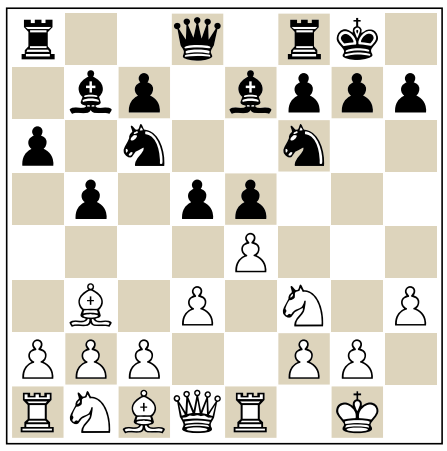
NOTES BY

Sergey Karjakin

RL 17.2 – C88
Sergey Karjakin
Alexander Onischuk
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (4)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.h3 ♗b7 9.d3 d5

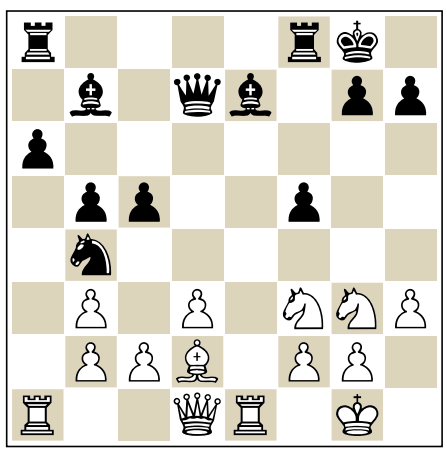
A revolutionary pawn sacrifice which became popular three years ago. It appeared that with 8.h3 White indicated his intention to play the anti-Marshall, but all the same Black 'forces' White to grab the pawn ☺.



10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xe5 ♘d4 12.♗d2 c5

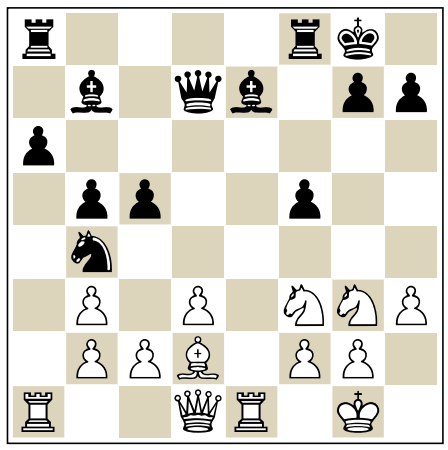
The main move is considered to be 12...♖e8. The text move first occurred in the game Yakovenko-Aronian, Khanty-Mansiysk World Cup 2007.

13.♘c3 ♘xb3 14.axb3 ♘b4 15.♘e4 f5 16.♘g3 ♕d5 17.♘f3 ♕d7



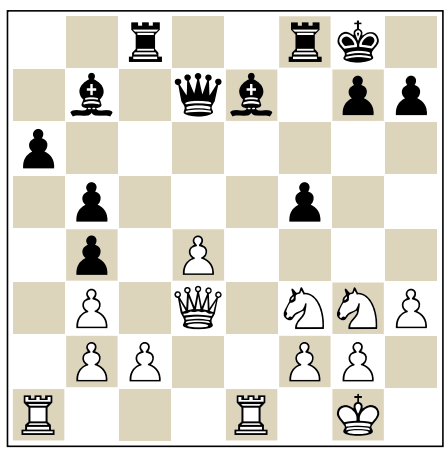
My opponent was playing quickly, whereas I was having difficulty remembering the nuances of the position, and I had already used half an hour. In view of this I decided to repeat moves on the threshold of possible time-trouble.

18.♘e5 ♕d5 19.♘f3 ♕d7



20.♗xb4! cxb4 21.d4 ♖ac8 22.♕d3

In my view, the most accurate response! Here my opponent began thinking and he caught up with me on the clock. The computer evaluates the position as equal, but in my view Black has to demonstrate his compensation for the pawn.



22...♗d6?

A mistake, after which Black unexpectedly stands very badly! He should have retained the advantage of the two bishops. After 22...g6! 23.c4 bxc3 24.bxc3 ♗f6 Black retains his two bishops, which ensures him practical compensation for the pawn, although for the moment one cannot talk about full equality. Black is also worse after 22...♗xf3 23.♕xf3 ♖xc2 24.♖xa6.

23.♘e5 ♕c7?!

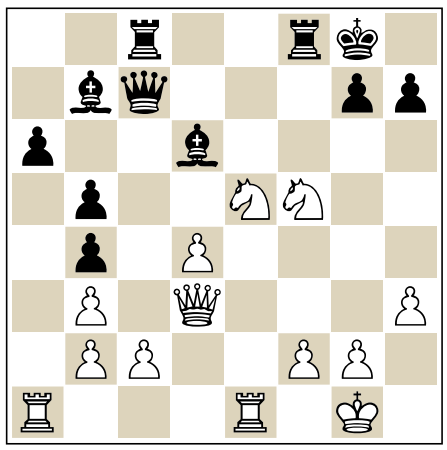
After this Black loses by force, but other moves are not much better.

NEW IN CHESS

Russia's top-scorer Sergey Karjakin kept a vivid interest in the games of his former Ukrainian teammates.

It is possible that initially Alexander had been counting on 23...♗xe5 24.♖xe5 ♕c6 25.d5 ♕xc2, but had overlooked the strong reply 26.♕d4! with a big advantage to White. 23...♕e6 24.d5 ♕e8 25.♖e2 is also bad for Black.

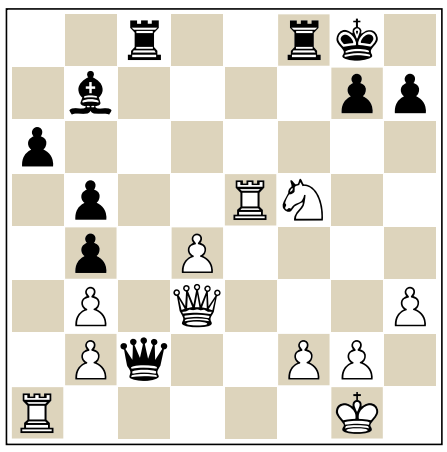
24.♘xf5



24...♗xe5

24...♕xc2!? would not have saved Black, although it was possibly the best practical chance: 25.♕xc2 ♖xc2 26.♘xd6 ♖fxf2 27.♘d3! ♖xg2+ 28.♔f1 h5 29.♖ac1 ♖cd2 30.♖e8+ ♔h7 31.♘f7 and Black does not manage to create any counter-threats, for example: 31...♖h2 32.♔e1 ♗d5 33.♖h8+ ♔g6 34.♘fe5+ ♔g5 35.h4+ ♔xh4 36.♘f4 g6 37.♘exg6+ ♔g4 38.♖xh5.

25.♖xe5 ♕xc2

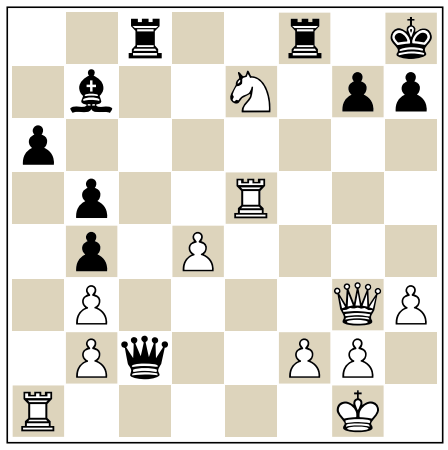


26.♘e7+!

An absolutely correct decision to play for mate! Weaker was 26.♕xc2 ♖xc2 27.♘d6 h6!! 28.f3 ♗xf3 29.gxf3 ♖xf3 30.♘f5 ♖ff2 31.♘e3 ♖xb2, when White retains a big advantage, but Black's resources are not yet exhausted.

26...♔h8 27.♕g3

Here it is not essential to see all the variations. It is sufficient to evaluate the position. White dominates in the centre and on the kingside, and Black's bishop is unable to help in the defence, which decides the outcome!



27...♖cd8

27...♕xb2 was also hopeless: 28.♖ae1 ♖c1 29.♔h2 ♖xe1 30.♖f5!! ♖c8 (if 30...♖g8 31.♘g6+, while after any other move by the rook 31.♕f4 is decisive) 31.♖f7 ♕xd4 32.♘xc8.

28.♖ae1 ♕d2

The only defence against ♘f5.

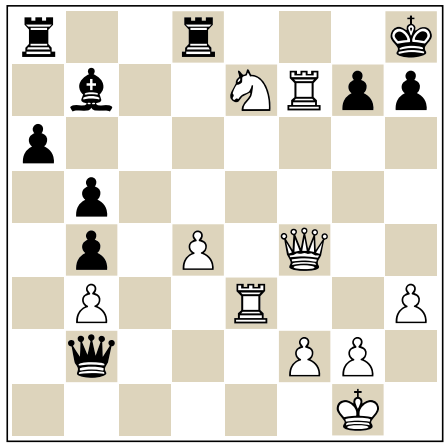
29.♖1e3! ♕xb2

29...♖f6 30.♘f5 (or 30.d5) 30...♖g8 31.♖c5! also did not offer Black any hopes.

30.♕h4 Renewing the threat of mate in two moves.

30...♖d6 30...♕c2 would also not have saved Black after 31.♖e2 ♕d3 32.♖h5.

31.♖f5 ♖a8 32.♕f4 ♖dd8 33.♖f7



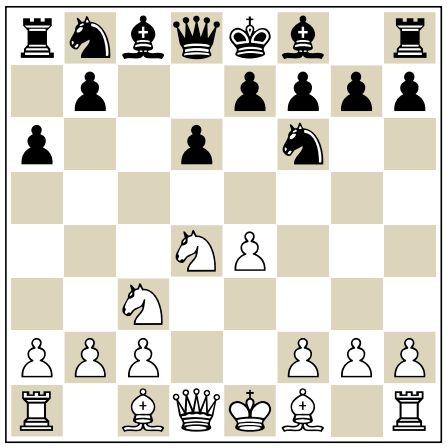
And in view of the enormous number of threats, Black resigned. Probably my best game at the Olympiad!

NOTES BY

Emil Sutovsky

SI 8.14 – B97
Alexander Motylev
Emil Sutovsky
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (5)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6



6.♗g5

Motylev is a renowned theoretician, and for many years he championed the 6.♗e3 system. Alexander won many excellent games there, and probably even more games were won on the strength of his analysis (most notably by Svidler and Karjakin). However, he recently switched to the 6.♗g5 system. I don't know the precise reason, but my guess is that the Fill-or-Kill line 6.♗g5 is just more suitable for a player who likes to analyse in depth. And Motylev is definitely a hard worker.

Of course, I had to be ready for both 6.♗e3 and 6.♗g5. Well, being a native Najdorf player, I had quite a bit of analysis in stock. Still, rehearsing and triple-checking them all before the game was a bigger problem...

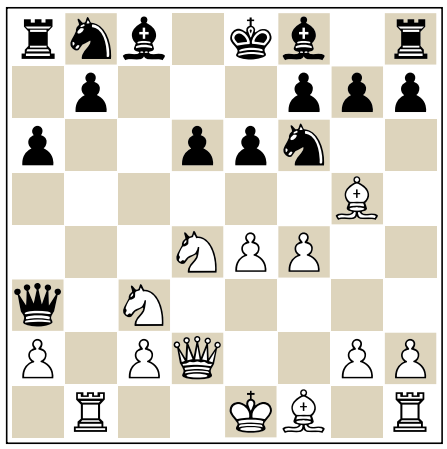
6...e6

This was probably something of a surprise for Sasha. In all my recent games in this line I responded with 6...♘bd7!?. Nothing wrong with that move, of course. But actually, I picked it in order to avoid all these forced draws in the Poisoned Pawn system. However, it was clear that Motylev would opt for the most principled continuation. So, on my way to the game I knew that in three to four hours I was going to gain a peerage, or Westminster Abbey...

7.f4 ♕b6 8.♕d2

A few remarkable games have been played recently after 8.♕d3. But... 'we are living in slightly exceptional times'. And so, this line was quickly exhausted with computer analysis, and after it was mened, tekeled and upharsined, the final verdict was given – it leads to a draw. Is this evaluation really indisputable? Well, let's wait for a new generation of computers and engines, but for now the ball is in White's court.

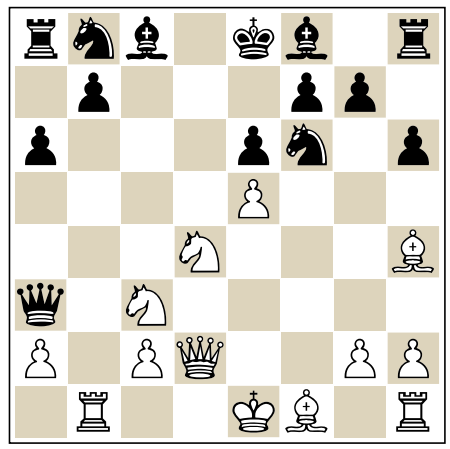
8...♕xb2 9.♖b1 ♕a3



10.e5

This is the old-new approach, which caused many Najdorf players serious headaches. Actually, it was first played in the famous game Tal-Tolush, Leningrad 1956. White won this fierce battle in style, but Tolush found an improvement, and in 1958 there was a game Kortchnoi-Tolush, out of which Black emerged victorious, effectively shooting down the whole idea for nearly 50 years! Then, in 2006, Teimour Radjabov came up with a new idea, convincingly beating Karjakin (rapid chess) and Anand (blitz). It turned out to be more serious than just a surprise weapon, and soon this attacking line got into the repertoire of the world's top players. However, back in 2008 I analysed the Rybka proposal 12...♘d5!, which did look quite ugly but turned out to be immune to all attacking ideas White could draw on. I was surprised that no 2600+ player dared to try it, and of course I expected Motylev to be ready.

10...h6 11.♗h4 dxe5 12.fxe5



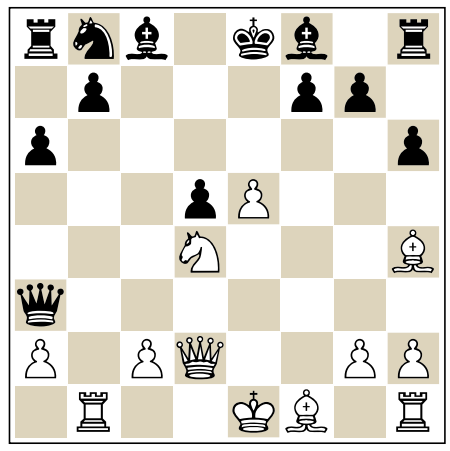
12...♘d5!

Previously, Black withdrew his knight to d7, and one may find dozens of games by 2700+ players there. Now there will probably not be much more action anymore, as the text-move seems to resolve all Black's problems. On the contrary, it's White who has to play cautiously in order to preserve the balance!

13.♘xd5

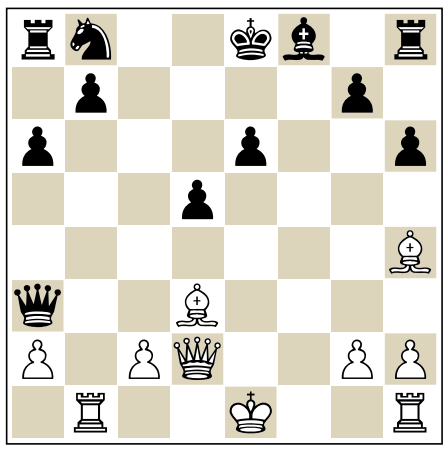
In fact the only move. However, Motylev thought for about 15 minutes before playing it. Afterwards he explained that this rare line had somehow escaped his attention and he had never analysed it. Naturally, he started spending a lot of time on every move and found himself in severe time-trouble around move 20...

13...exd5



14.e6 Once again, the strongest. But again after a long think (over 30 minutes...). Other continuations do not contain any poison; what's more, they hardly even equalize:
– 14.♗c4 ♗e7 15.♗xe7 ♕xe7 16.♗xd5 ♕xe5+, and although White might be able to regain the pawn, holding the position with accurate play, it's not exactly something he dreamt of just a couple of moves ago...
– 14.c4 ♗e7 15.♗xe7 ♕xe7 is clearly better for Black.
– 14.♖b3 ♕a4 15.e6 ♗xe6 16.♖xb7 (16.♘xe6 ♕xh4+!) 16...♘d7 is just hopeless for White, as he has no time to create any threats.

14...♗xe6 15.♘xe6 fxe6 16.♗d3

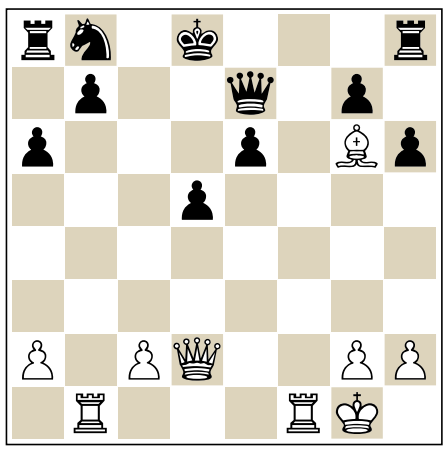


Logical play. Black's king is exposed, the pawn on b7 is hanging, Black is horribly lagging in development... Some 20 years ago (or 10 even?) such a position didn't demand any further analysis. But the times are changing. Concrete analysis shows that Black is in time to protect himself – he just has to be ready to give back his extra pawns, while the Steinitz king feels secure in the middle of the board!

16...♗e7 17.♗g6+ ♔d8 18.♗xe7+

18.♗f2 is a tempting but unfortunate attempt to preserve the bishops, as after 18...♖f8 19.♖xb7 ♘d7 20.0-0 ♗c5 Black is on top.
18.♗g3 ♖f8 doesn't work either, as White's own king will become a target...

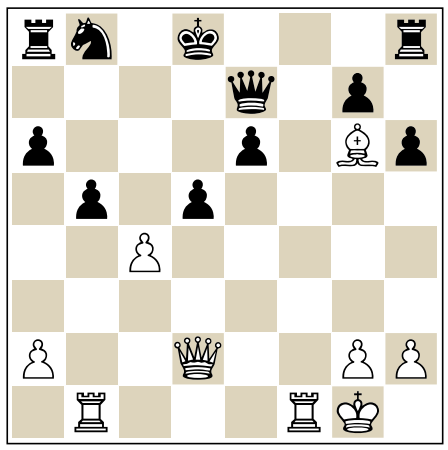
18...♕xe7 19.0-0



Finally White has castled, bringing his last piece into the attack. Black's position looks way too dangerous, but I had a strong idea in mind. The day after this game I discussed it with Garry Kimovich (Kasparov-ed.), who visited the tournament hall. He liked my next move, saying that he had analysed this position and it looked pretty dangerous to him, especially after he found that the computer's proposal 19...b5 was insufficient due to the mighty 20.c4!. I had also found this one in my preparation and decided to finally finish my development with the text-move. White can regain both pawns, but his bishop becomes inferior to my knight in almost every line. Evidently, the position is still mathematically equal, but I was still in my opening book, while Sasha had less than half an hour left to reach the time-control...

19...♘d7

19...b5 20.c4! indeed looks like a killer. However, even here Black seems to have a defence. Here is the illustration:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

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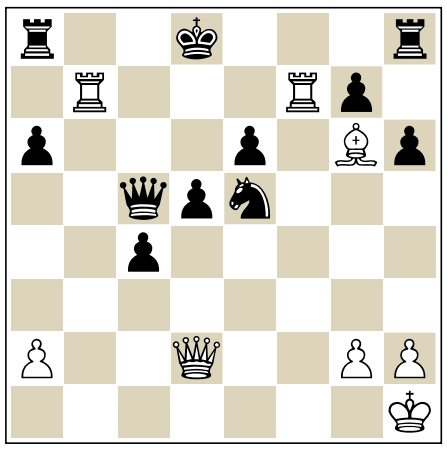
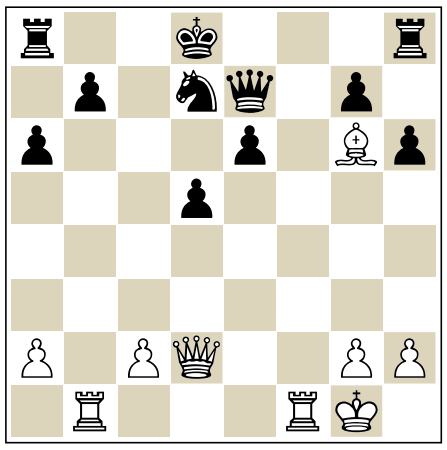
20...bxc4 21.♖f7 (21.♕e3 ♘d7 22.♖f7 ♕d6 23.♖b7 – 23.♖xd7+ ♕xd7 24.♕b6+ ♔e7 25.♕b4+ ♔f6 26.♖f1+ ♔xg6 27.♕b1+ ♔h5 28.g4+ ♔g5 29.♕c1+ ♔xg4 30.♕d1+ ♔g5 31.♕d2+ ♔g6 32.♕c2+ ♔h5 33.♕e2+ ♔g6 34.♕c2+ ♔h5 and it's still just a perpetual – 23...♘c5 24.♖bc7 ♘d3 25.♕g3 – 25.h3 ♕xc7 – 25...♕b6+ 26.♔f1 ♕b1+ 27.♔e2 ♕c2+ 28.♔e3 ♕c1+ 29.♔e2, and this time it's my turn to deliver the perpetual ☺) 21...♕c5+ 22.♔h1 ♘d7 23.♖b7 ♘e5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

24.♕e1 ♘xf7 25.♕xe6 ♕d6 26.♕xf7 ♖f8 27.♖d7+ ♔c8 28.♖xd6 ♖xf7 29.♗xf7 ♔c7 30.♖xd5 ♖f8 31.♖f5 c3 32.♖f2 ♔d6 33.♔g1 c2 34.♖xc2 ♖xf7, and the endgame is drawn. Of course, I could have given you many more beautiful lines, but I know all too well that most of the readers dislike this variation jungle, inevitably preferring English language to chess notation...



20.♖xb7

After this natural capture White is already worse. He should have gone 20.♖f7 ♕c5+ 21.♔h1, when Black has a choice between several logical moves. Both 21...♖c8 and 21...♖f8 will lead to a pretty equal position, according to Its Majesty the Comp, although the line 21...♖f8 22.♖xg7 ♖f6 does look promising for Black. Actually, I have to confess that in recent years we have been looking more and more like the characters from Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. We build a machine that gives us the answer. In our case it's much more often 0.42 rather than just 42 (unless it is mate in 42), and we just have to trust it – otherwise, why do we spent so many years building that machine? Anyway, at least in this position I understand why it's equal – White can (and should!) repeat moves – 23.♖g8+ ♖f8 24.♖g7 – as Black's attempt to deviate with the logical 24...♔c7 is met by 25.♗f7 ♕d6 26.♕c3+. Actually, Black is not worse here after 26...♔d8, but I am tired of these computer lines...

Israel's Emil Sutovsky was in great shape. He won gold on Board 2 and had the highest overall performance, 2895, of the entire Olympiad.

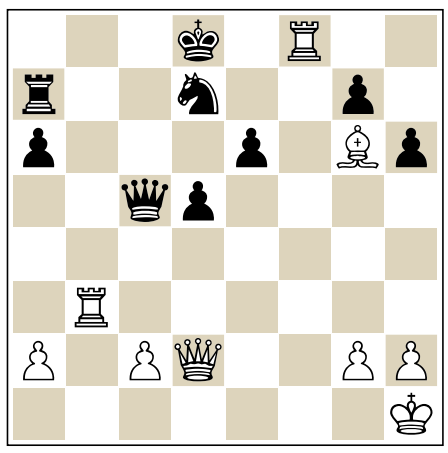
20...♕c5+ 21.♔h1

Here I was finally out of my preparation. Both 21...♖b8 and the text-move seemed logical, but in the end the purely human desire to keep this knight on d7 prevailed.

21...♖a7 22.♖b3

It says that 22.♖bb1 was stronger, but of course Motylev's move looks more logical. Now I intended to play 22...♖c7 (which gives Black a quite significant advantage, according to all the engines), but I couldn't resist the temptation to bring another rook into play.

22...♖f8 23.♖xf8+

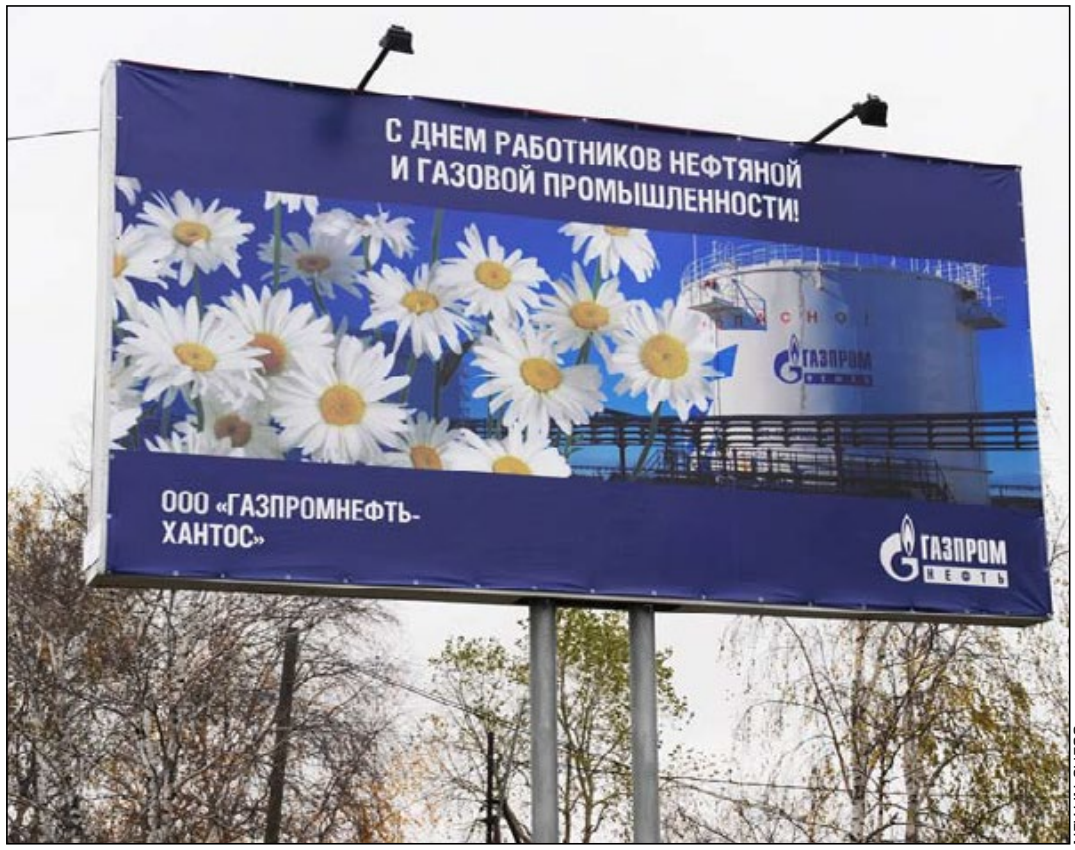


23...♘xf8

Quite an important decision. It took me some 20 minutes to opt for this move. Actually, I calculated many lines and saw the position which occurred in the game after move 29. What's more, I managed to assess it correctly.

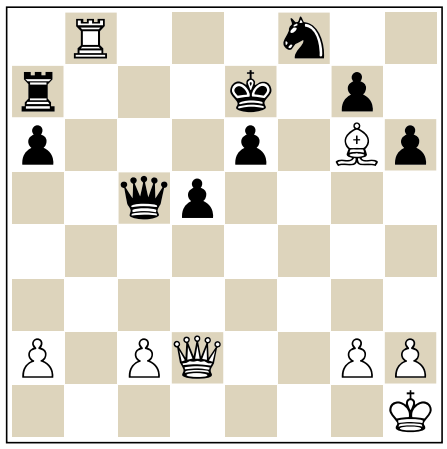
However, objectively stronger was 23...♕xf8, preserving the advantage after 24.♕a5+ ♖c7 25.♖f3 ♕c5 26.♕xa6 ♖c6. I reached this position in my calculations, but I wasn't sure if I had realistic chances to convert it. I am still not sure about it now. So I stick to the opinion that my choice was better, at least from a practical point of view.

24.♖b8+ ♔e7



NEW IN CHESS

The 39th Olympiad ran on oil and gas. Gazprom, the largest extractor of natural gas in the world, and the largest Russian company, was one of the main sponsors.



25.♗h5

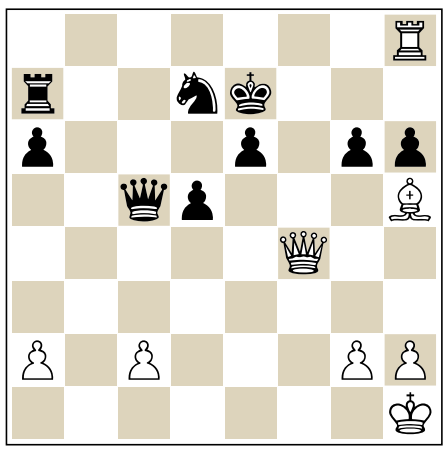
25.♖e8+ ♔d7 is bad for White, but 25.♕d3 ♖c7 26.h3! ♖c8 27.♖xc8 ♕xc8 28.♕d4 ♘xg6 29.♕xg7+ ♔d6 30.♕xg6 gives White good chances to hold. But who, I ask you, would play moves like 25.♕d3 and 26.h3? O tempora, o Rajlich!

25.♖xf8 ♔xf8 26.♕f4+ ♔e7 is elementary for any silicon calculator, but of course I needed to check it carefully as well.

25...g6 26.♕xh6

This one is already losing. Actually, there was a way to save the game, but to find all these only moves was indeed an insurmountable task, especially with a clock counting his last minutes...

26.♕f4! ♘d7 27.♖h8, and now:



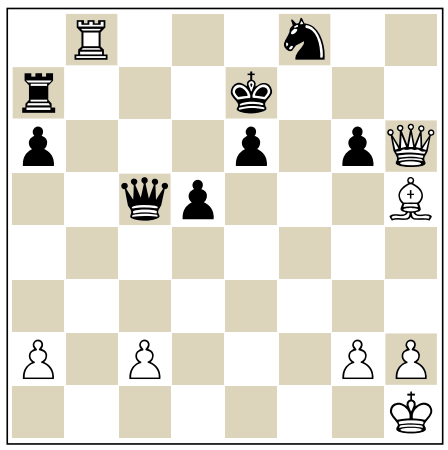
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) During the game I saw that 27...gxh5 28.♖h7+ ♔e8 29.♖h8+ ♘f8 30.♕b8+ ♔f7 31.♕f4+ would lead to a draw, but I relied on 27...♕c3. 'It doesn't amuse us,' I hear Its Majesty mumbling, and bringing on the following line:

B) 27...♕c3 28.♖h7+ ♔d8 29.♗e2 ♖b7 30.♗xa6 ♖b1+ 31.♗f1, and suddenly it's just a draw, as my queen has to cover the h8-square – 31...♕c4 32.♖h8+ ♔e7 33.♖h7+ ♔d8 34.♖h8+ ends in another perpetual;

C) 27...e5 is probably the best try, although White seems to hold after 28.♕h4+ ♔d6 29.♖xh6 ♔c7 (29...♕xc2 30.♖xg6+ ♔c7 31.h3 ♖b7 32.♔h2 and White is out of danger) 30.♗xg6 ♕e3 31.h3 ♖b7 32.c3 e4 33.♖h7 ♖b1+ 34.♔h2 ♕g1+ 35.♔g3 ♕e3+ 36.♔h2. Well, here we witness another perpetual. Now I ask you, with these ever-modifying rules, shouldn't we award, like, 0.6 points for those who chase the enemy's king and lack just a bit to deliver mate?

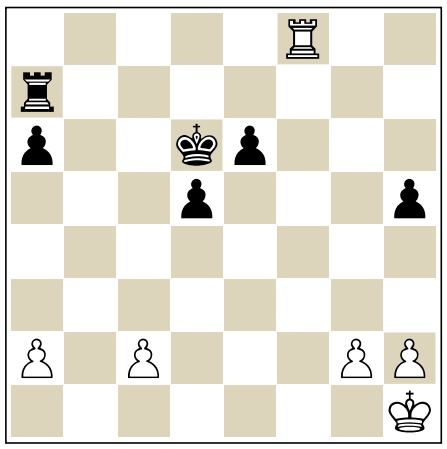
No, no, forget about this before this proposal is heard by these innovative guys from the Laws of Chess commission who will probably soon limit the number of pee sessions during the game...



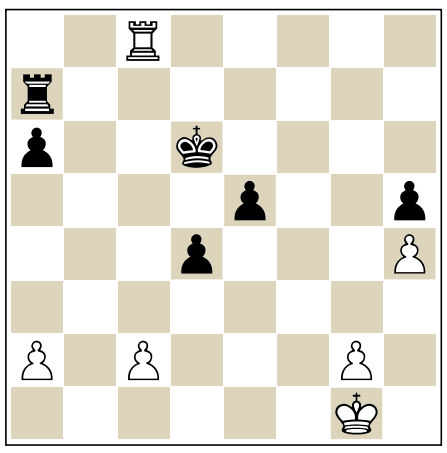
26...♕f2!

He had missed this one. Now White has to liquidate to a rook ending, which is (surprise, surprise, Herr Tarrasch – or was it Monsieur Tartakower? – the dis-

pute is still on) winning for Black.
27.♕g7+ ♔d6 28.♕xf8+ ♕xf8 29.♖xf8 gxh5



30.♖c8
The other defensive strategy, 30.♔g1 ♖c7 31.♖f2, was slightly more stubborn. However, Black has more than one way to victory here: 31...e5 (or 31...♖c3 32.♔f1 ♖a3 33.♔e2 ♖xa2 34.♔d2 ♖a1 35.♔c3 a5 – just rolling with the a- and e-pawns...) 32.♔f1 e4 33.♔e1 e3 34.♖f3 d4 35.♔d1 ♔d5 followed by ♖c7-b7-b1-c1, with an easy win.
30...e5 31.h4
31.♔g1 ♖f7! 32.c3 d4 33.cxd4 exd4 is just hopeless for White.
31...d4 32.♔g1



32...♖f7!
The last finesse.
33.♖a8 ♔d5 34.♖xa6 ♖c7 35.g4 ♖xc2 36.gxh5 d3 37.♖a8 d2 38.♖d8+ ♔e4 39.♔f1 ♔e3
And White resigned.
Following this victory, I managed to win another four games in succession, achieving probably the best result in my career and helping my team to get the bronze medals.

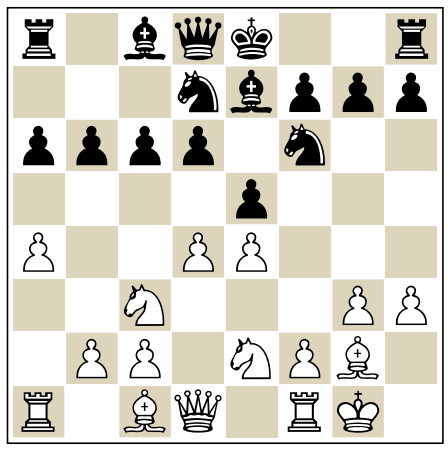
NOTES BY
Ivan Salgado

PU 5.3 – B07
Peter Svidler
Ivan Salgado
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (11)

We were in the last round of the Olympiad. Our team was having a great tournament, although we lost two important matches against Holland and France. As happens in Swiss systems, we had won the previous rounds and now found ourselves sitting in the top section. Playing against Russia in the last round is turning into a tradition. In the previous two team championships, the Olympiad in Dresden and the European championship in Novi Sad, we had twice drawn 2-2, which gave us confidence for this match. If we wanted to win a medal (for the first time in history) the only way was to win. Our match strategy was simple: to neutralize Karjakin and Svidler (that's where our opponents topped us in rating) and letting Alexey (Shirov) and Paco (Vallejo) play against Kramnik and Grischuk. There the Elo difference was not that big. Alexey has a good score against Kramnik, and Paco has never lost to Grischuk. This seemed to be the only way to have chances.

As for my game, we had been considering what would be the best way to equalize against Svidler. Last year, when I was helping Paco during a tournament in San Sebastian where Svidler also played, we had decided to bore him with the Berlin Defence, and this seemed like the most adequate option, although I don't often go for the endgame.

As it was, this was exactly what my opponent believed we had planned, and I take it that he concentrated primarily on this. However, looking at Svidler's games I found that, incredibly, he had only played once against the Philidor in his life! (according to my database, of course.) What's more, that game was played against Movsesian... in San Sebastian! Fortunately, I had seen the post-mortem of that game and I had got a vague idea about the way Svidler thought. Of course I was not thinking about the future at that moment, but just wanted to learn chess, as I loved his dynamic style. Our game developed as follows:
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3
Various times Svidler has played 3.♗d3, but after the normal continuation 3...e5 4.c3 d5! 5.dxe5 ♘xe4 6.♘f3 ♘c6 the position seems to me to be playable for Black.
3...e5 4.♘ge2
I had not exactly seen this move coming, but I had expected a deviation from the main lines because of his limited practical experience in this opening.
4...♘bd7 5.g3 ♗e7 6.♗g2 c6 7.a4 b6 8.0-0 a6
Another possible move order was first 8...♗b7.
9.h3



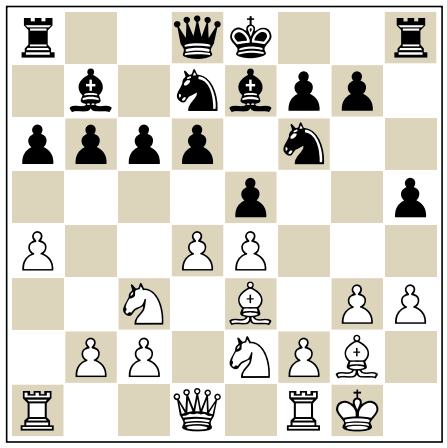
9...h5!
I had only learnt of this idea a few days before, while preparing for Godena. It was shown to me by our fourth-board player Jordi Magem Badals. The idea is simple: to prevent g4, at the risk of the pawn on h5 becoming weak. But you also have to take into account that if White cannot play g4

and ♘g3, the knight on e2 doesn't have much perspective. At least, that is what I was thinking ☺.

10.♗e3

There's another interesting option, although Black manages to get good play: 10.♗g5!? ♗b7 11.♕d2 0-0 12.f4 ♖e8 13.♗f3 b5 14.♖ae1 ♕b6 15.♔h2 ♗f8 16.b4 ♕c7 17.g4 hxg4 18.hxg4 a5, and Black was better and went on to win in Li Chao-Pelletier, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

10...♗b7



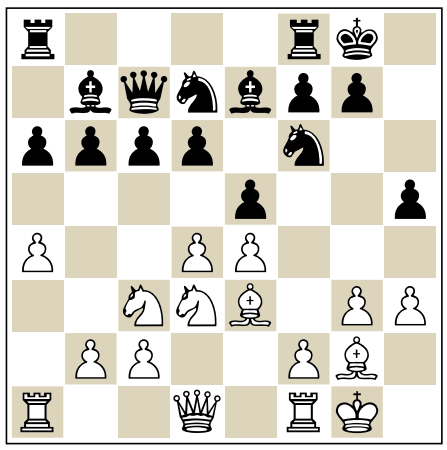
11.♘c1!

A new move. After he made it, my opponent had already used up 25 minutes on the clock, whereas I had played everything almost instantly. Up to this point I had played with confidence, as my opponent was constantly watching the games of his team mates and didn't seem to like his position too much till he put his knight on c1. At that point I thought for 10 minutes to convince myself that this was the best move. From d3 the knight will control the advance ...b4 and put pressure on e5. What's more, it has left the bad square e2.

My reference game had seen 11.f4 0-0 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.f5 b5 14.axb5 axb5 15.♖xa8 ♕xa8 16.g4 hxg4 17.hxg4 b4 18.♘b1 ♖d8 19.♘g3 ♗c5 20.♗xc5 ♘xc5 21.♕f3 ♖d4 22.g5 ♘fxe4, and Black was better, although the result was a draw, in Negi-Magem Badals, Sabadell 2008.

11...0-0 12.♘d3 ♕c7

Starting counterplay immediately with 12...b5?! would have been premature: 13.d5! ♕c7 (13...cxd5 14.exd5 also favours White) 14.dxc6 ♕xc6 15.axb5 axb5 16.♘b4, and White is better.



13.f4?!

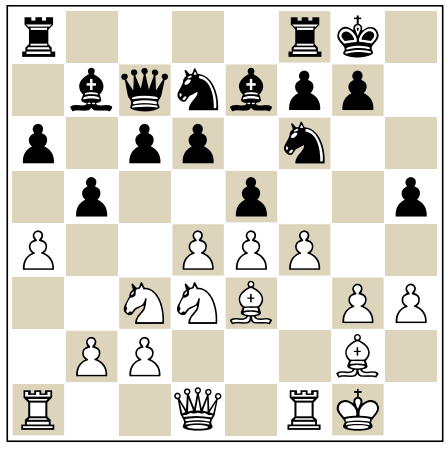
This move appeared premature to me. I think that White has to proceed in a prophylactic manner in order to prevent ...b5 and only play f4 later.

To me the best move seems to be 13.♕d2! ♖fe8!? (13...b5?! 14.d5! ♘b6 15.dxc6 ♗xc6 16.axb5 ♘c4 17.♕e2 ♘xe3 18.♕xe3 axb5 19.♘b4 h4 20.g4, and in the future the weakness of b5 will make itself felt) 14.♖fe1 ♖ad8 15.b3, and in this position it is difficult to make progress for either side, but due to his slight space advantage White should have an edge.

13...b5

If White now advances the pawn to d5, the pawn on f4 doesn't help much, which is why I didn't wait with the push of the b-pawn.

But 13...♖fe8!? was more solid.



14.♘f2?!

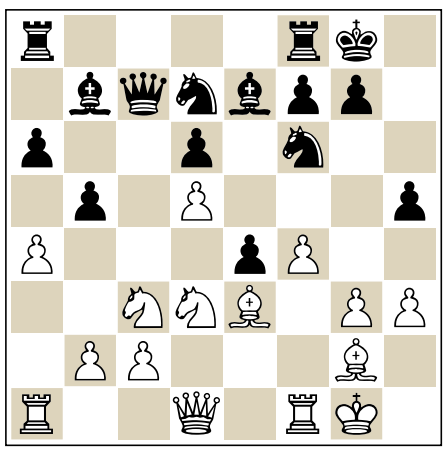
This move I couldn't understand. The knight was perfectly placed on d3.

Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 – performance ratings

				%	TPR
1	Emil Sutovsky	IGM	ISR 2665	81.3	2895
2	Vasily Ivanchuk	IGM	UKR 2754	80.0	2890
3	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM 2783	75.0	2888
4	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS1 2747	80.0	2859
5	Vitaly Teterev	IGM	BLR 2511	87.5	2853
6	Ian Nepomniachtchi	IGM	RUS2 2706	72.2	2821
7	Zoltan Almasi	IGM	HUN 2707	70.0	2801
8	Ivan Sokolov	IGM	BIH 2641	75.0	2798
9	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS1 2780	61.1	2794
10	Zahar Efimenko	IGM	UKR 2683	77.3	2783
11	Wang Hao	IGM	CHN 2724	75.0	2783
12	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	IGM	AZE 2756	65.0	2778
13	Sergei Movsesian	IGM	SVK 2723	72.7	2776
14	Alexander Grischuk	IGM	RUS1 2760	66.7	2776
15	Wang Yue	IGM	CHN 2732	66.7	2772
16	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	IGM	POL 2711	66.7	2769
17	Gata Kamsky	IGM	USA 2705	70.0	2756
18	Teimour Radjabov	IGM	AZE 2748	66.7	2755
19	Evgeny Alekseev	IGM	RUS2 2691	66.7	2754
20	Dmitry Yakovenko	IGM	RUS3 2726	60.0	2743
21	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA 2733	60.0	2741
22	Francisco Vallejo	IGM	ESP 2697	65.0	2739
23	Pavel Eljanov	IGM	UKR 2761	70.0	2737
24	Anish Giri	IGM	NED 2677	72.7	2730
25	David Navara	IGM	CZE 2722	60.0	2730
26	Sergey Rublevsky	IGM	RUS3 2683	72.7	2727

With a firm handshake Ivan Salgado and Peter Svidler begin their game. The sensational win of the Spanish GM ruined Russia's chances to win the Olympiad.

The most interesting was to push d5. Even if the pawn on f4 doesn't help, this was called for: 14.d5! cxd5 15.exd5 e4!? (that was my idea)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

16.♘b4 (after 16.♘xe4 ♘xd5 17.♗f2 h4! 18.g4 – good for Black is 18.gxh4? ♗xh4! 19.♗xh4 ♘e3 20.♕d2 ♘xg2 – 18...♘c5 Black has counterplay) 16...bxa4 17.♘xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♖fe8! 19.♖xa4 ♗h4 – this position is very complicated, but I think that Black has good chances.

My opponent suggested 14.g4?!, and in this case the knight would not be badly placed on f2. I suppose that this explains his move. 14.g4?! may be followed by 14...hxg4 15.hxg4 exd4 16.♗xd4 c5! – now he is forced to give up the bishop pair: 17.♗xf6 ♗xf6, and Black is slightly better.

14...♖fe8

While my opponent was thinking, Karjakin offered a draw in a worse position and with black. After thinking for five minutes Jordi accepted. On the one hand we had considered a draw a good result before the match, but on the other there was not much risk in the position for White. After he had finished his game my team mate tried to justify himself, telling me why he had accepted the draw, and when he was done I said: 'Now I must do my job'.

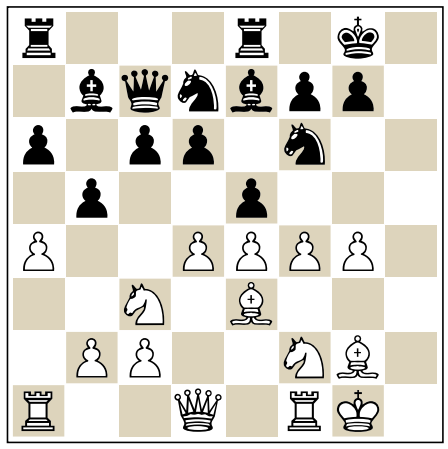
I made my 14th move and offered a draw. In a normal tournament I would not have done this, but in this team competition I did it, because I thought it confronted my opponent with a dilemma: he had already made a draw in 15 moves as White against Ivanisevic, and in a better position than he had in our game. On the other hand, I didn't know how he would react to my offer. My impression was that he would have accepted the draw without any problems, but that his team told him to play. If you're not too eager to play, but someone forces you to do it anyway, you start to play worse. And once you start liking your position less and less, you keep thinking: 'Why didn't I accept that draw offer?'

15.g4

He immediately turned down the draw offer, thought for 20 minutes (now he had only 20 minutes left for 25 moves) and played this move, which is in line with his previous move. But his plan is wrong.

It was necessary to play a more solid continuation: 15.axb5 axb5 16.♖xa8 ♖xa8 17.♘e2, when Black has no problems but White's position is quite solid.

15...hxg4 16.hxg4



16...b4

I needed some time to find the difference between 16...b4 and 16...exd4, but I didn't reach at a clear conclusion. Both looked fine and this one seemed more forcing, which is why I played it.

After 16...exd4 17.♕xd4 d5! (during the game I wasn't sure about 17...b4 18.♕xb4! d5 19.♕b3 ♘c5 20.♕a2 ♘cxe4 21.♘cxe4 dxe4 22.c4, because I wasn't sure about the perspective of my knight, but the engine tells me I have a large advantage) 18.axb5!? (both 18.e5 c5 and 18.g5 ♘xe4 19.♘cxe4 dxe4 are fine for Black) 18...c5! (this move I didn't see during the game) 19.♕d3 d4 20.bxa6 ♖xa6 21.♖xa6 dxe3 22.♕xe3 ♗xa6

Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 – Open

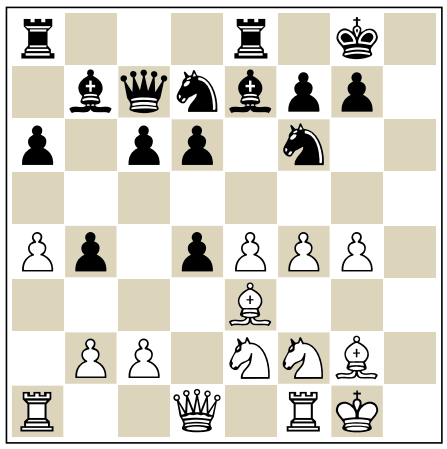
		Pts	Tb
1	Ukraine	19	380.5
2	Russia 1	18	379.5
3	Israel	17	367.5
4	Hungary	17	355.5
5	China	16	362.0
6	Russia 2	16	355.0
7	Armenia	16	345.0
8	Spain	16	332.0
9	United States	16	315.5
10	France	16	311.5
11	Poland	15	346.5
12	Azerbaijan	15	333.0
13	Russia 3	15	320.5
14	Belarus	15	307.5
15	Netherlands	15	305.0
16	Slovakia	15	302.5
17	Brazil	15	290.5
18	India	15	287.0
19	Denmark	15	257.5
20	Czech Republic	14	338.5
21	Italy	14	316.5
22	Greece	14	302.5
23	Cuba	14	299.0
24	England	14	292.0
25	Argentina	14	281.0
26	Estonia	14	277.0
27	Kazakhstan	14	274.0
28	Moldova	14	265.0
29	Iran	14	259.5
30	Georgia	13	316.0
31	Bulgaria	13	287.5
32	Croatia	13	284.5
33	Serbia	13	278.5
34	Sweden	13	277.0
35	Lithuania	13	268.0
36	Slovenia	13	264.5
37	Canada	13	264.0
38	Austria	13	263.0
39	Russia 4	13	258.0
40	Iceland	13	257.5
41	Egypt	13	252.0
42	Montenegro	13	251.5
43	Qatar	13	236.0
44	Peru	13	231.0
45	Turkey	13	230.0
46	Uruguay	13	227.0
47	Zambia	13	202.5
48	ICSC	13	197.0
49	Uzbekistan	12	285.0
50	Philippines	12	276.0

149 teams, 11 rounds

23.♖a1 ♗c8 24.e5 ♘xe5 25.fxe5 ♘xg4 26.♘xg4 ♗xg4 27.♘d5 the position is still complicated.

17.♘e2 exd4

After 17...c5!? 18.dxe5 dxe5 19.f5 I was afraid of being mated after g5-♘g4, which I think is reasonable from a human point of view.



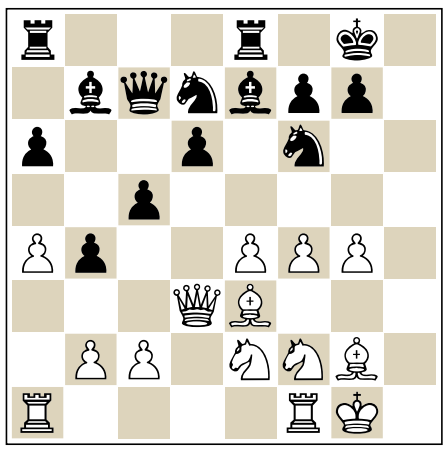
18.♕xd4

The most solid approach to keep the e4 pawn defended.

The riskiest try was 18.♘xd4!? c5 19.♘f5 ♗f8 20.♕d3! g6 21.♘g3 c4! 22.♕d2 ♘c5! 23.♕xb4 ♘fxe4. During the game I calculated till this point and thought my position was better: 24.♘gxe4 ♘xe4 25.♖fe1 ♕c8.

18...c5 19.♕d3

19.♕d2 ♗f8 is excellent for Black.

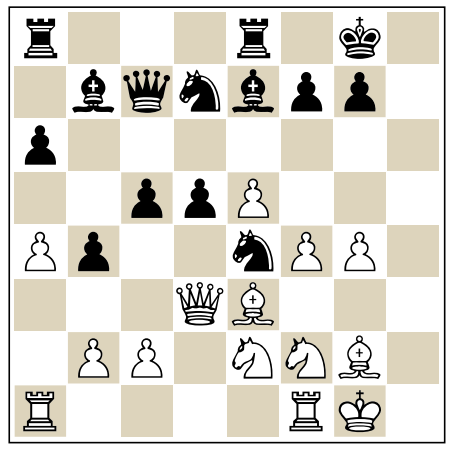


19...d5

Maybe this was not the best move order, but Black still has the advantage.

The most accurate was 19...c4!? 20.♕d4 d5! 21.e5 ♖ad8! 22.♕d2 ♘e4 23.♘xe4 dxe4. This would have been very similar to the game. I didn't play this order because I hadn't seen 21...♖ad8.

20.e5 ♘e4



21.♘xe4

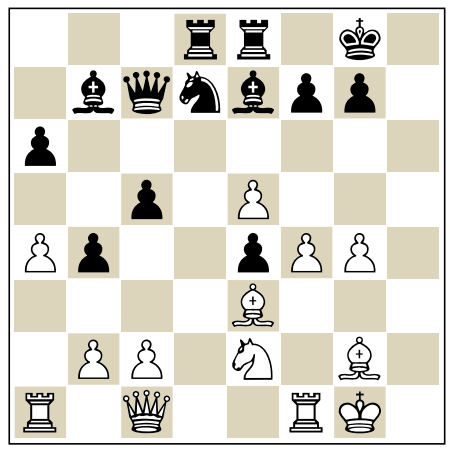
My opponent played this rapidly. I assume that he didn't want me to play ...♖ad8, avoiding for good the capture on e4. But there was an interesting alternative.

The computer continuation 21.g5!? didn't occur to me, although it was clear to me that my next move would be the same against almost any white move: 21...♖ad8 22.g6 f5! 23.♗h3 ♕c6 24.♗xf5 ♖f8 25.♗xd7 ♕xg6+ 26.♗g4 ♗c8. The position is not clear, but it seems that Black has some advantage.

21...dxe4 22.♕d1 22.♗xe4? loses to 22...c4 23.♗h7+ ♔h8 24.♕f5 ♕c6. **22...♖ad8 23.♕c1**

It was difficult to decide between this move and 23.♕e1. My intuition told me that 23.♕e1 was the right move, to get the rook on a1 into play at some point.

The problem is that playing the queen to e1 doesn't work for tactical reasons: 23.♕e1!? ♘b6 24.♘g3 ♗h4!. This is the difference. 25.♗f2 ♗xg3 26.♗xg3 ♘c4.



23...f6!

After thinking for 10 minutes. My opponent had 15 minutes left and I had various interesting moves at my disposal. What was clear to me was that I wanted to keep the initiative and didn't want to give him any counterchances. For that purpose the text was the best move.

After 23...♗h4 24.♗f2 ♗xf2+ 25.♖xf2 f6 26.♕e3 fxe5 27.f5! ♘f6 28.♗h3 Black should be objectively better, but I didn't see a concrete road to victory, and I thought white ideas like ♖h2, g5, ♕g3 were a bit scary.

A risky option was 23...g5!?, but I didn't want to create a weakness in front of my king.

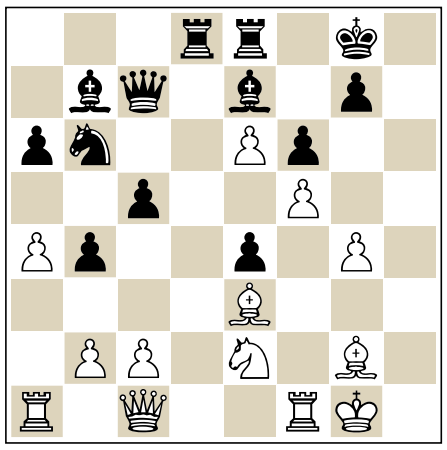
The solid approach was 23...♘f8 24.♘g3 (24.g5 ♕c8!) 24...♘g6 25.♘f5 ♘h4 26.♘xh4 ♗xh4 27.g5, and Black should be better, but once again, this is nothing concrete.

And after 23...♘b6 White plays 24.♘g3!. The only way to avoid this move was to play 23...f6, so I did.

24.e6 ♘b6 25.f5

White has a strong pawn on e6, but I gained a tempo to develop the initiative, which I think was more important here.

After 25.♘g3 Black has 25...♗f8!. This was the idea of 23...f6!. Now White cannot play 26.f5 because of the knight on g3.



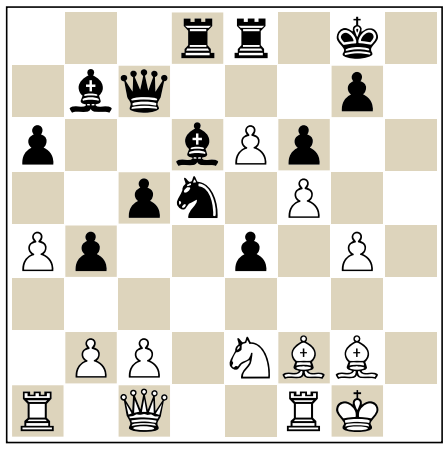
25...♘d5!

The most precise, as otherwise White would get some activity.

After 25...♘c4 26.♘f4! a5 27.♕e1 ♗d6 28.♘g6 White obtains some counterplay.

26.♘f4

Eliminating the strong knight on d5 seems to be the most sensible option, but other continuations were also good for Black: 26.♗f2 ♗d6!



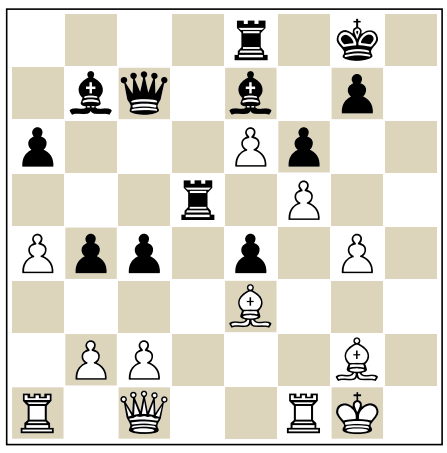
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

27.♖d1 (27.♗xe4? allows a trick that I saw during the game and that I liked a lot: 27...♘c3! 28.♘xc3 bxc3 29.♗xb7 ♗h2+!, and Black wins) 27...g5!. The black queen threatens to go to h7, winning the game. I don't see a defence for White. Or 26.♖d1, when after 26...♗d6! White has no active move, as all his pieces are tied up.

26...c4!

The a7-g1 diagonal and the advance of the b- and c-pawns will be of crucial importance.

27.♘xd5 ♖xd5

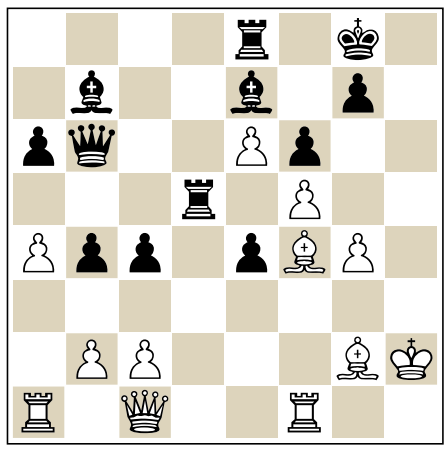


28.♗f4

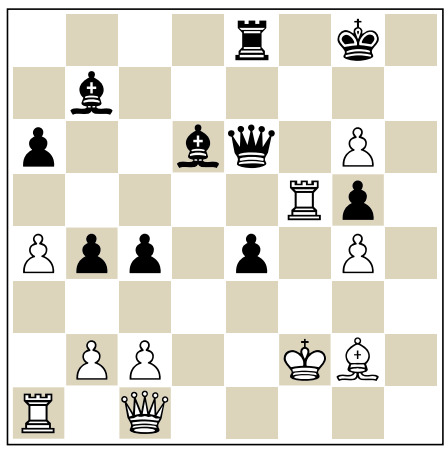
After 28.♕e1 Black plays 28...b3!. This was what I saw when I played 25...♘d5!. Without this move things wouldn't be clear. Play could continue 29.♖f2! (the most tenacious defence) 29...bxc2 30.♖xc2 ♖d3, with a strong black initiative.

28...♕b6+ 29.♔h2?

After this I no longer see a defence for White. But his position was already very difficult. For instance, 29.♗e3 ♗c5 30.♖e1 b3! (again it is very important to get the d3-square for the rook) 31.♗xc5 ♕xc5+ 32.♕e3 ♕xe3+ 33.♖xe3 bxc2, and Black is winning. Or 29.♔h1 g5! 30.♗e3 ♕c7 31.♗xg5 (if 31.♕e1 then 31...♔g7, and the attack continues) 31...fxg5 32.f6 ♕g3!, and White is lost.



29...g5! The decisive blow. Now the rook on e8 will also join the attack. **30.fxg6** If 30.a5 then 30...♕c5, and wins. **30...♕xe6 31.♔g3 ♖g5** Another winning move was 31...♗c8 32.♗h3 ♔g7!. **32.♗xg5** 32.♗h3 is met by 32...♖xg6, and Black is winning. **32...fxg5 33.♖f5 ♗d6+ 34.♔f2**



34...e3+ 35.♔g1 ♗xg2 36.♔xg2 ♕e4+ White resigned.

After the game was finished I was really happy and was dreaming about our chances of winning a medal. But Kramnik beat Shirov and that quickly brought me back to earth.

11 victories in 11 matches. What next?

Just like the Russian men, the Russian women came to Khanty-Mansiysk as top-seeds, but as their male colleagues stumbled once again, the ladies triumphed with flying colours. With the Kosintseva sisters on top boards and World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk on Board 3, Russia was unstoppable. Never letting off steam they won all 11 matches to claim the first ever Vera Menchik Cup in the history of their country. Russia's women's coach (and former second of Garry Kimovich Kasparov) **Yury Dokhoian** provides the background of their phenomenal success.

It is the year 2005. Garry Kimovich retires from chess, and I, his long-standing second, sign a contract with the Kosintseva sisters. We held our first training session in August 2005. This marked the start of my journey into the wonderful, emotion-filled world of women's chess. It has to be said that earlier I paid hardly any attention to women's tournaments. But now the standard of women's play has greatly improved: their best games are on a par with male grandmaster games.

A year of very intensive work followed. Of course, one year is a short time for the developing of a genuinely strong chess player. A qualitative leap usually does not occur so quickly. Especially now, when the amount of preparation has increased so much. But it was then that the foundation was laid, one which has now enabled the Kosintsevas to reach the level of respectable male grandmasters. In 2006 the year-long contract came to an end and the question arose of how to continue the work. I had no clear idea, but here Alexander Grigorievich Bakh suggested taking a look at the Russian national team, and if it were of interest to me, to continue working with Tatiana and Nadezhda in a team context. The first time I travelled was to a friendly match with China. I saw a rout. Only Tatiana and Nadezhda finished with a plus score thanks to the fact they had already 'got up off their knees', so to speak. The other members of the team finished with a heavy minus score. This was simply humiliating. How could this be? Our men win, but the women lose ingloriously, and only the Kosintsevas put up something of a fight. And in February 2007 I took charge of the team.

Within literally a couple of months we travelled to the World Team Championship. I already had some experience – the year of working with the sisters and two

The golden girls and their coach became regular guests on Russian television. (L. to r.) Valentina Gunina, Yury Dokhoian, Tatiana Kosintseva and Nadezhda Kosintseva.

or three months supervising the team. The team was completely inexperienced. Anything could have been expected, but not that we would lose 0-4 to the Chinese! Of course, at that time they crushed everyone. But I saw the difference in class, no longer in a friendly match, but an official one. In the friendly event the Chinese girls might lose, but here they were highly composed and competitive, and they did not allow their rivals any chances. This was a challenge in big letters, branded, as it were, on my forehead. I saw the powerful Chinese team and our girls, who in a sense were helpless, and I realized what my next aim was – it took shape. The idea occurred to me: to raise the organizational standard of the preparation process to what was required – in order to at least compete with the best women chess powers.

I joined a team, which had never won the gold medals – either at the Olympiads, the World Championships, or the European Championships. For the last fifteen years – that was for sure. In the modern world everything changes within 3-4 years, but here – 15 years!

In general, the work began. The composition of the team was constantly changing, and now, compared with 2007, only Tatiana and Nadezhda remained. At some point I took the course of preparing some completely young players. I made a note of Valya Gunina – she had played successfully in the Premier Leagues but poorly in the Super-Finals. A talented girl with lots of energy. When I saw how she defeated Lahno with black, I decided to look at her more closely and possibly enlist her in the team. I appealed to the federation, to help her with training sessions, a trainer, and the solving of other organizational questions.

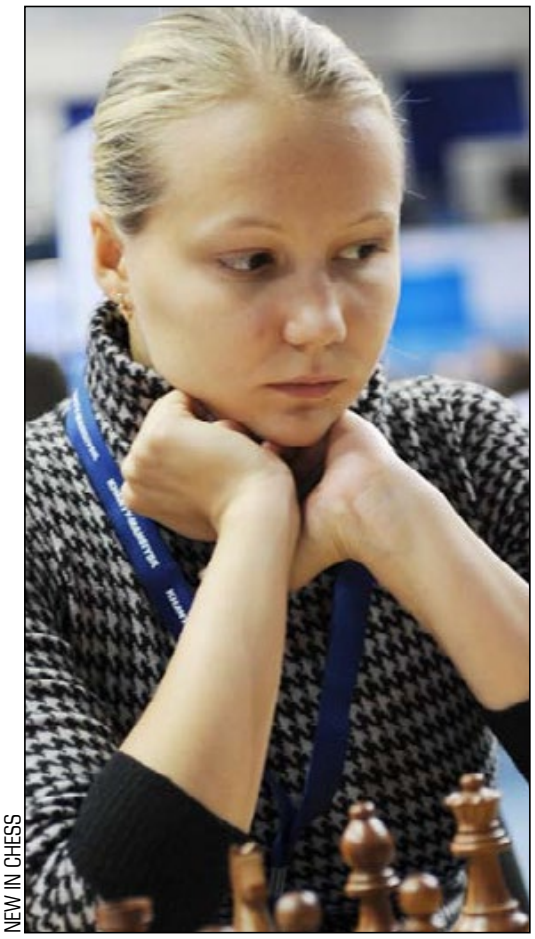
In 2007 we became European champions. A completely new team was built, with the enlisting of Elena Tairova, Valentina Gunina and Marina Romanko. At the time, I remember, I said in an interview that the best of these three would probably establish herself in the main team. And that is what happened. Valentina's results constantly improved, and I often saw her at training sessions. She took a serious attitude to the opportunity that had presented itself, and I utilized this. I hope that she will continue to make progress and that the current Board 4 is not the limit for her.

After the title of European champions was won for the second time, the most important aim became the winning of the Olym-

piad. During this time we gradually succeeded in catching up with the Chinese team. Whereas in 2006 there had been practically no fight, in the friendly match in 2007 in Novgorod we won more matches than China (we lost only on the overall number of points). And in the next match – in Ningbo – we altogether crushed the Chinese women: we defeated them both at the classical time limit and at blitz. This was a landmark in the development of the team, a turning-point, when old notions were destroyed. Our team was perhaps not yet ready to win, but it was clear that we were on the right path, and becoming stronger each year. And at the Olympiad we were able to reach a completely different qualitative level. In addition, we all became genuine friends. Against this background, even Alisa Galliamova, who has not played very often in recent times, warmed both humanly and chess-wise.

I am fully aware of Alisa's chess potential. I had no doubts about her ability and understanding of the game. The only question was how well she could prepare herself for a specific intense and important competition. No one could know this before the start of the Olympiad. As it was, Alisa adapted smoothly into the team. Alisa is a unique phenomenon in the chess world. She could have become the Russian Judit Polgar. How many times did she play in men's tournaments with young masters, and grandmasters! And how successfully she sometimes performed in these strong events! If the current potential is maintained, plus if Sasha Kosteniuk regains that brilliant form which she displayed in the world championship, it will be very difficult to compete with our team. Of course, there are some rough edges which need to be erased, and the players know this. And if they realize all their possibilities, which are not yet fully disclosed, the potential of the team will increase.

At this last Olympiad we faced a very serious test, in that we played earlier than anyone against our main rivals. Thus the Ukrainian team met the Chinese in the last round, whereas for us it was virtually at the start of the Olympiad. Since we had the highest rating and we were winning all



NEW IN CHESS

Working diligently Valentina Gunina established herself in the Russian national team.

our matches, the teams we faced were the most ambitious at that moment. For example, the 'dark horses' Hungary, who the previous day defeated Poland 4-0. With us the result was diametrically opposite: 0-4. Moreover, we did not simply win by a whitewash, but, more importantly, we demonstrated our standard of play. The same happened in the match with Bulgaria. In general, when our team gained psychological confidence a 4-0 score became a normal phenomenon for us.

Tatiana made the best score on the top board, and Nadezhda on the second board. The responsibility was enormous, but Tanya withstood it, although she was not playing her best chess. On the whole, I was calm about our first two boards; I merely had to monitor the situation.

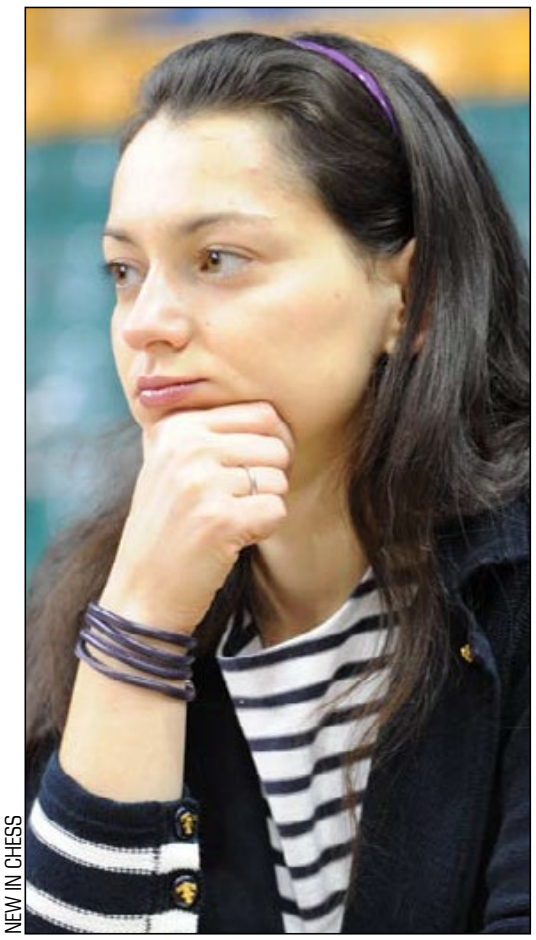
Of course, historically the world champion should have played on the top board. This is her lawful right. But during the training sessions, Sasha Kosteniuk, who was unable to prepare fully for the Olympiad and in particular to gain enough practice, herself expressed the desire to play on board three in accordance with the ratings. I think she took a difficult, but courageous and correct decision, which was to the benefit of the team as a whole. Incidentally, this quality greatly impresses me – a sober assessment of one's own condition. To swallow one's pride and put the aims of the team higher – this shows the calibre of a person.

Very important for me was the situation on board four, which developed after the second round. Already some began saying that Galliamova was not prepared for the Olympiad and soon we would have to stick to just four players. But then a regular transformation occurred with Alisa Mikhailovna. Amazingly, it proved enough simply to talk with her. She effectively changed her play and followed the trainer's instructions, which brought results. How pleasant it was to observe these changes: from 'highly unstable' at the start to 'ultra-reliable' later!

At the time when I joined the team I suggested the system 'five + three', by which, in my view, the most effective training activity can be achieved. Previously in the team there had not been a person who could normally – I emphasize normally, at the proper level –

prepare one or two players. This is individual work! And to spread our resources and largely simply imitate preparation was a variation that I immediately rejected.

My zone of responsibility is Tatiana and Nadezhda, and that of my assistant (initially he was Mikhail Kobalia, and since the 2009 European Championship – Alexey Korotylev) – two other members of the team. Sasha Kosteniuk has her own trainer, with



NEW IN CHESS

World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk took a courageous decision and asked to play on Board 3.

whom she is working at the given moment – earlier it was Yury Sergeevich Razuvaev, and now – Alexander Chernin (the only exception was last year's European Championship, where Kosteniuk was helped by Korotylev).

In my opinion, such a system is ideal for helping the girls to be best prepared for rapidly changing women's chess. These changes are very apparent.

Take, for example, the year 2006. What openings did the world champion play? Those with the moves d3, c3, b3, Bc4 or Bb5+ in the Sicilian. The current world champion Kosteniuk has a very modern repertoire. Look at the present-day elite – Hou Yifan, Koneru, the Kosintsevas... The quality of their opening preparation is at the level of a grandmaster with a rating of 2600-2650! I think that this tendency will only intensify. If you look at the games of the best young women players – in them the very latest opening developments are employed, and interesting novelties are tested.

Of course, the most interesting events begin after the opening. On the whole, a deep, subtle understanding of chess is not yet typical of women's play. At some point they are simply transported into another world – they begin to be gripped by the process of the play itself and the associated emotions, and grasping the secrets of chess is pushed into the background. In addition I would add that they are not capable of effective, independent work at the level of strong male grandmasters with a minimum rating of at least 2650, i.e. genuine professionals. However, I am sure that the strongest women players should and will be able to play at this level. The question of when this happens is only a matter of time.

When Garry Kimovich won his tenth super-tournament in a row, 'well-wishers' came up to me and said: all the same the next one has to be won. This did not disturb us, although when you achieve extremely good results, to some extent you begin fighting your own shadow. To retain something is always more difficult than to acquire it. I hope that after the success in the Olympiad our women's team will receive further support. Especially since our rising generation can well follow the example of our first and second national teams.

NOTES BY

Tatiana Kosintseva

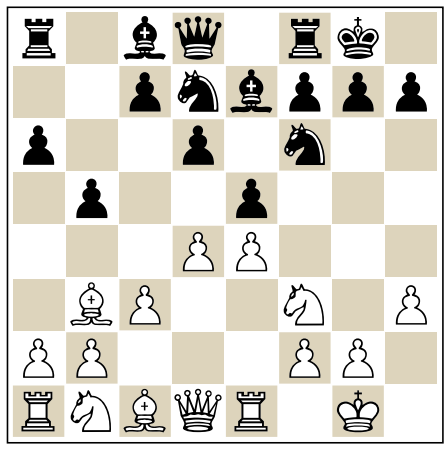
RL 25.6 – C95
Hou Yifan
Tatiana Kosintseva
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (5)

The pairings so turned out that in the 4th, 5th and 6th rounds our team met our main rivals in the battle for the top prizes: Georgia, China and Ukraine respectively. The match with Georgia developed calmly and favourably for us from the very start, but the match with China caused us considerable anxiety. The tension and emotions were running high... I had to play Hou Yifan, and this was already our fourth game this year. The three preceding games had been played in stages of the Grand Prix (with two wins for Kosintseva and one draw – ed.). Looking ahead, I should say that the game turned out to be rather nervy by both sides, with mutual mistakes.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘b8

This is the currently popular Breyer Variation of the Ruy Lopez, which I employ quite often.

10.d4 ♘bd7



11.c4 An old continuation, which rarely occurs nowadays. White's idea, without wasting time on preparatory manoeuvres, is to immediately create pressure in the centre, thereby forcing Black to change the pawn structure.

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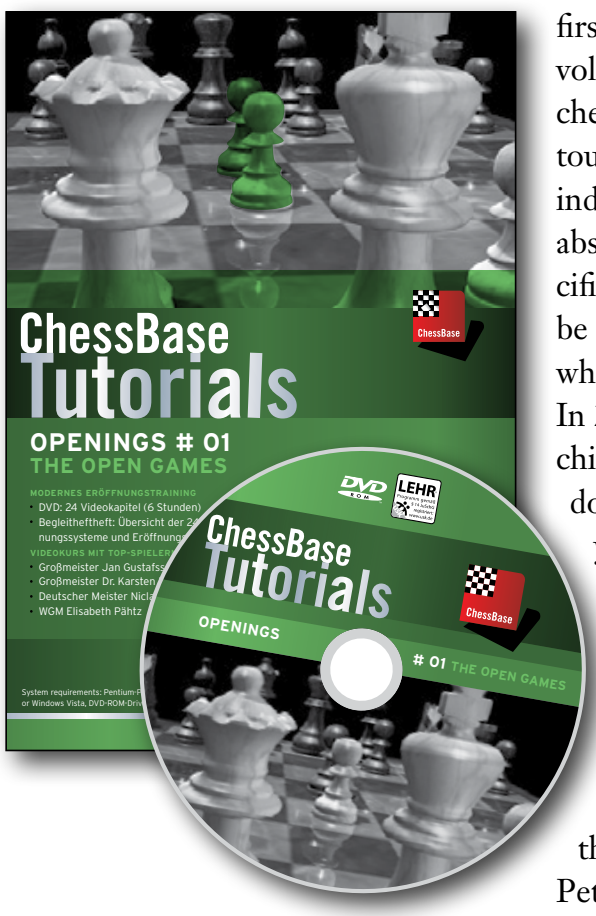

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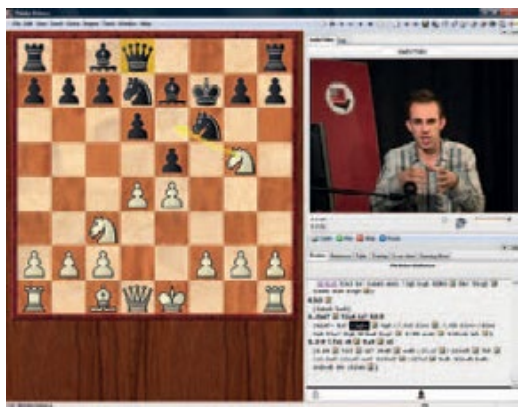

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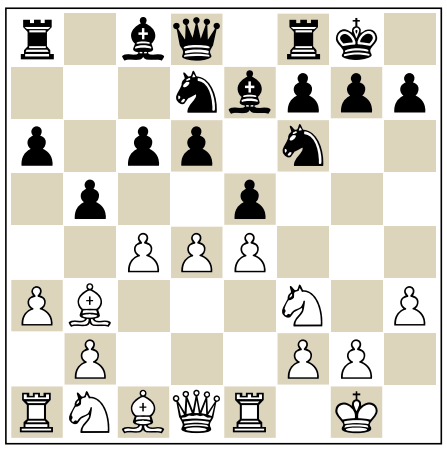
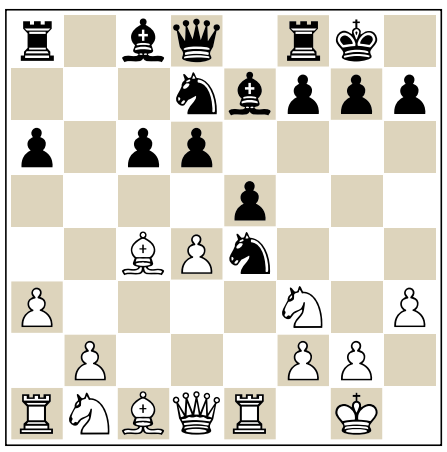
11...c6 12.a3

A multi-purpose move: White prepares the development of her knight at c3, and at the same time vacates the important a2-square for the bishop on b3 in case of necessity.



12...♕c7?

Here routine development is fraught with problems, since Black's normal moves gradually come to an end, whereas, thanks to her spatial advantage and ideal arrangement of the pieces in such a pawn structure (♘c3, ♗g5, ♖c1), White has simple and clear play. Therefore the immediate reaction in the centre 12...bxc4 13.♗xc4 ♘xe4 is more logical against the plan in question:



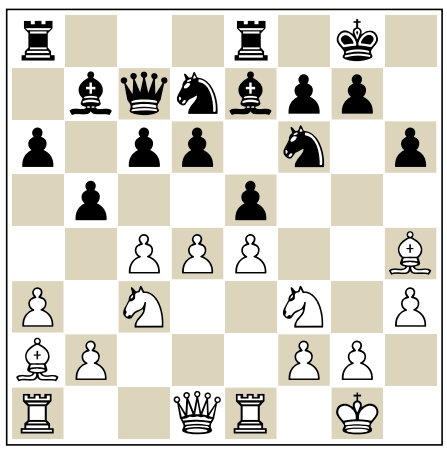
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 14.♖xe4 d5 15.♖e1 dxc4 16.♕e2 ♖e8 17.♘bd2 exd4 18.♘xd4 ♗b7 19.♘xc4 ♗f6 20.♕xe8+ ♕xe8 21.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22.♗e3 c5 23.♘f5 ♗d5 24.♘cd6 ♖b8 25.♖d1 ♗e6 ½-½, Penrose-Unzicker, Luzern 1963;

B) 14.dxe5 d5 15.♗a2 ♕b6 16.♕c2 ♗c5 17.♗e3, with complicated play, Jimenez Zerquera-Robatsch, Havana 1964.

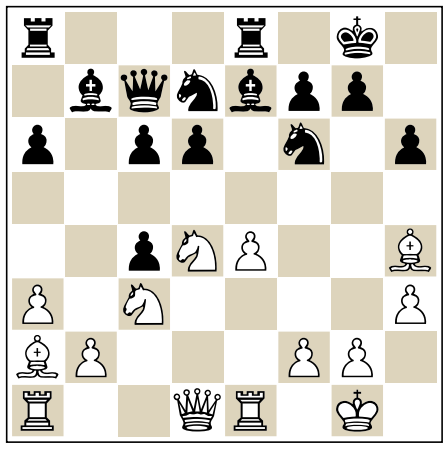
13.♘c3 ♗b7 14.♗g5 h6 15.♗h4 ♖fe8 16.♗a2

Preparing both a possible ♕b3 with an unpleasant x-ray against the weakened f7-point, and also the pawn advance b2-b4.



16...bxc4?

Seeing a simple and clear plan for White (the gradual increasing of the pressure by ♖c1, b4 and ♕b3), I did not want to mark time any more, since it seemed that another couple of quiet moves on my part might only aggravate the situation, for example, in the event of the natural 16...♖ad8. Therefore I decided to embark on activity in the centre, but I made a mistake in my calculations. The operations in the centre should have been begun with 16...exd4!? 17.♘xd4 (17.♕xd4 ♘e5) 17...bxc4, and now:



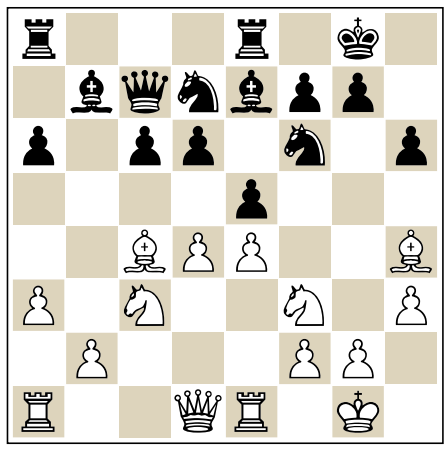
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 18.♗xc4 d5 19.exd5 cxd5 20.♗b3 ♗d6 21.♕f3 ♖ab8 with unclear play;

B) 18.♘f5!? ♗f8 19.♗xc4 d5 (19...g6 20.♘e3) 20.♗g3 ♕b6 21.♗a2 with the initiative for White.

17.♗xc4?!

An inaccuracy, allowing Black to retain a more flexible pawn chain than after 17.dxe5 ♘xe5 18.♘xe5 dxe5 19.♗xc4, which would have led to a durable advantage for White thanks to her better pawn formation.



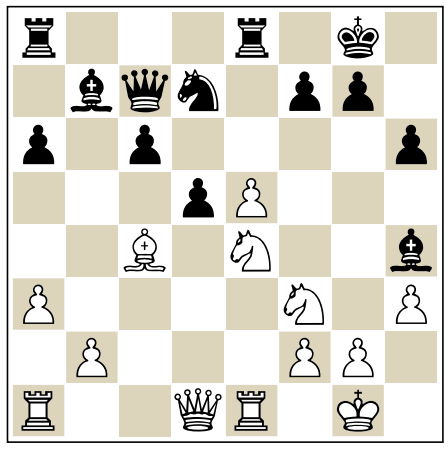
17...d5?

A continuation of the incorrect calculation, begun on the 16th move. Black should have preferred 17...exd4 18.♕xd4 c5 19.♕d2 ♘b6 20.♗a2 ♖ad8 21.♗g3 ♗f8 with a white edge.

18.dxe5 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4

Interesting play would have resulted after 19.♖xe4!? ♗xh4 20.♖xh4 dxc4 21.♕d6 ♖ac8 22.♖d1 ♘xe5 23.♘xe5 ♖xe5 24.♕xc7 ♖xc7 25.♖xc4 with a difficult endgame for Black.

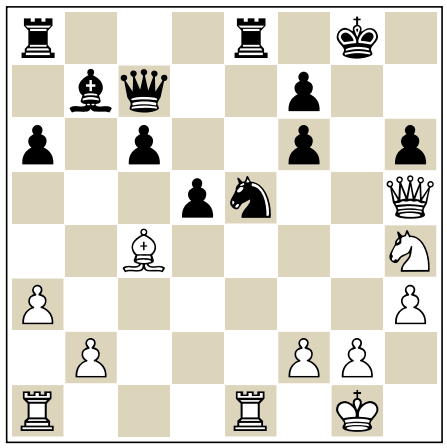
19...♗xh4



20.♘d6?!

The decision to win the exchange suggests itself, but it transpires that Black gains quite good compensation. The alternative was the

less obvious 20.♘xh4!? ♘xe5 21.♘f6+!, switching to an attack on the king, where the complications after 21...gxf6 22.♕h5 would have ended in White's favour:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 22...♘xc4 23.♕g4+ ♔h8 24.♘f5 ♖g8 25.♕h4! ♖g6 26.♖e7 ♕d8 27.♘xh6 and wins;

B) 22...dxc4 23.♘f5 ♗c8 24.♖xe5 ♗xf5 25.♖xf5 ♖e5 26.♕g4+ ♔f8 27.♖xf6 ♖ae8 28.♖f1 ♖8e6 29.♖xe6 ♖xe6 30.♕xc4 and White is clearly better.

20...♖xe5

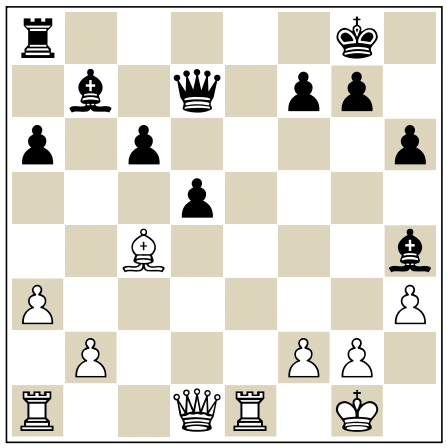
Black is forced to part with material, as otherwise in the event of 20...♖e6 21.♘xh4 dxc4 22.f4 swift punishment would be inevitable.

21.♘xe5 ♕xd6?!

A loss of time, allowing White to achieve the optimal coordination of her pieces.

21...♘xe5 22.♖xe5 ♕xd6 was more accurate, gaining an important tempo for the stabilization of the pieces.

22.♘xd7 ♕xd7



23.♗e2

White's idea is to place her bishop on f3, thus restraining the advance of the c- and d-pawns. 23.♗d3!? was more forceful, intending the unpleasant ♗b1-♕d3 battery: 23...c5 24.♖c1 ♗e7 25.h4! ♗d6 26.♗b1, and Black faces a difficult defence.

23...♗e7

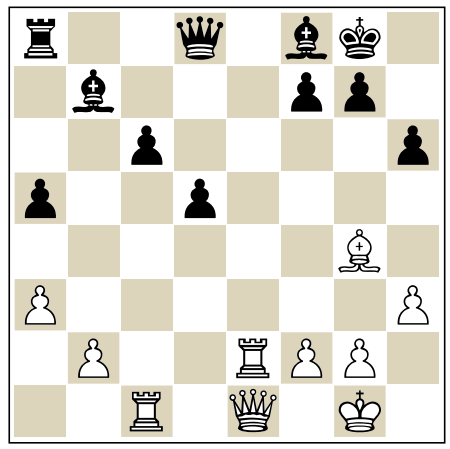
After reckoning that the set-up with c5 and ♗f6-d4 did not work because of a possible b4, after which the bishop on d4 would end up in a hanging position, I decided to place my bishop on f8, from where it also supports the c5 pawn. But this plan is too slow.

24.♗g4 Not an essential move. From this point White began playing quite quickly, having decided on the plan of occupying the e-file with subsequent exchanges. Again there was a more forceful decision: 24.♕b3!? a5 25.♕b6 ♗d8 26.♗g4 ♗xb6 27.♗xd7 with a white advantage.

24...♕c7 25.♖e2 ♗f8 26.♕e1?!

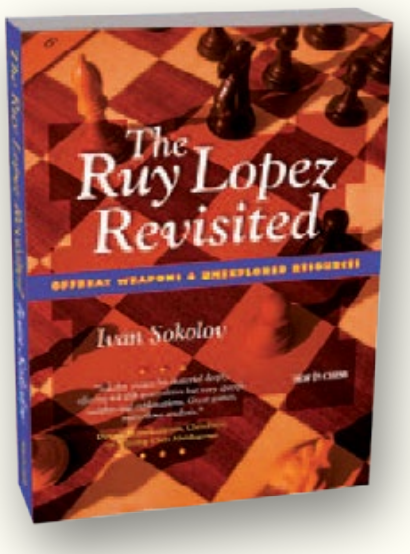
A continuation of the intended plan.

26...♕d8 27.♖c1 a5



28.♖c3?

This is already a serious mistake, a consequence of the preceding non-essential moves. White blindly continues carrying out her plan of tripling on the e-file, completely disregarding Black's counterplay. It turns out that, instead of making accurate decisions on the last two or three moves, after



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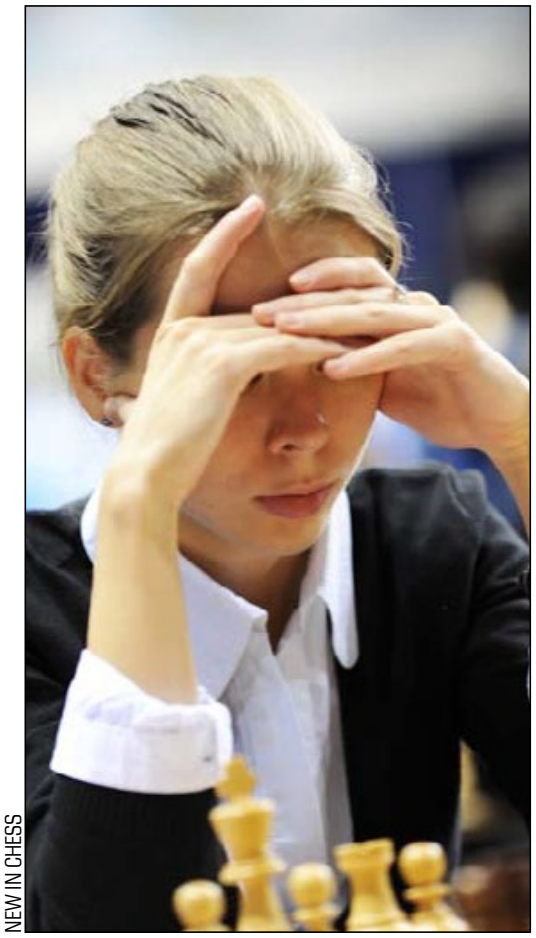
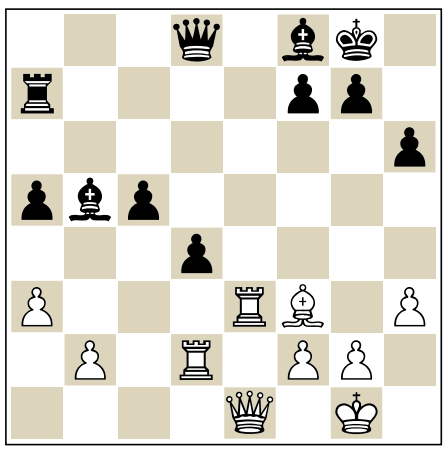


NEW IN CHESS

Tatiana Kosintseva in a typical pose, shielding her eyes in total concentration.

which Black would have faced a difficult defence, White has stood still, allowing Black to develop significant compensation. The cautious 28.♕d2 a4 (28...c5 29.♗f3) 29.♖ce1 ♗a6 30.♖e3 would have retained the advantage for White.

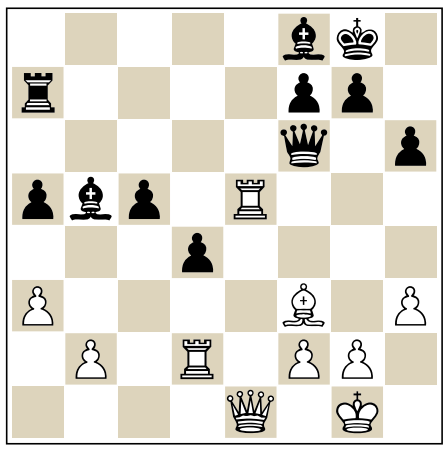
28...d4 29.♖b3 ♗a6 30.♖d2 c5 31.♗f3 ♖a7 32.♖e3 ♗b5



Black has clearly made more progress: she has advanced her pawns a long way and restricted the mobility of the white rooks, for which much credit goes to the now active bishop on b5.

33.♖e5 ♕f6

33...♗d6 34.♖e4 ♕f6 was better.



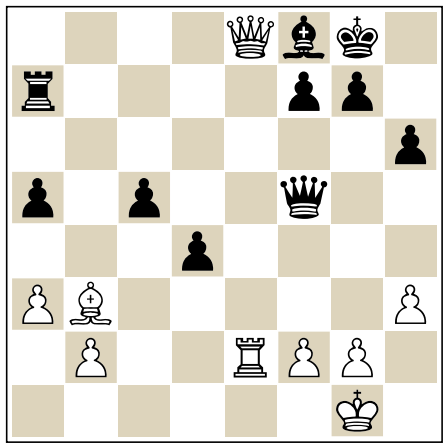
34.♗d5?

White still did not sense the danger, although the character of the play has now changed sharply. Both 34.♖xd4 cxd4 35.♖xb5 a4 36.♕d2 g6 and 34.b4 axb4 35.axb4 ♗d6 lead to equality.

34...♗d6 35.♖e4 ♕f5 36.♗b3 ♗c6 37.♖e8+

A forced measure, since the two black bishops and the queen were now aiming at the white king. 37.♖ee2? loses to 37...♕f4.

37...♗xe8 38.♕xe8+ ♗f8 39.♖e2

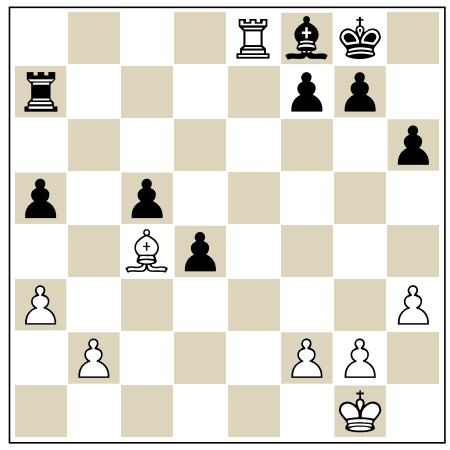


39...♕d7?

The sharply changed situation on the board and the time scramble prevented me from quickly readjusting to the new position, where Black now has the advantage. After 39...d3 40.♖e5 ♕f6 (40...♕f4 41.g3) 41.♕b8 ♖e7 42.♖xe7 ♕xe7 43.♕f4 ♕d7 White would have faced a long and difficult defence.

40.♗c4 ♕xe8 41.♖xe8

Here Black's extra pawn is compensated by the active white rook, and also the presence of opposite-coloured bishops. Therefore within a few moves the game ends peacefully.



41...g6 Or 41...a4 42.♖b8 g6 43.♔f1 ♔g7 44.♔e2 ♗d6 45.♖b6 with a draw.

42.a4 ♔g7 43.♔f1 ♗d6 44.♔e2 ♖e7+ 45.♖xe7 ♗xe7 46.g3 h5 47.f4 h4

Draw agreed.

NOTES BY

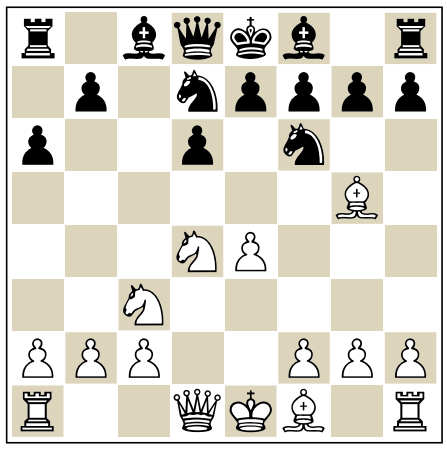
Nadezhda Kosintseva

SI 4.1 – B94
Nadezhda Kosintseva
Ju Wenjun
Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 (5)

This game was played in one of the key matches for our team – against China. Previously the Russian ladies' team had never won this particular contest in official championships. In addition, my personal score against Ju Wenjun, to whom I had lost two classical games in the past two years, instilled an enormous desire to gain revenge.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 ♘bd7

A move order which in recent times has become increasingly popular in the Najdorf with ♗g5. In choosing this continuation, Black does not object to a later transition into this or that branch of the variations arising after 6...e6, but merely tries to exclude certain possibilities for White which exist after that move order.

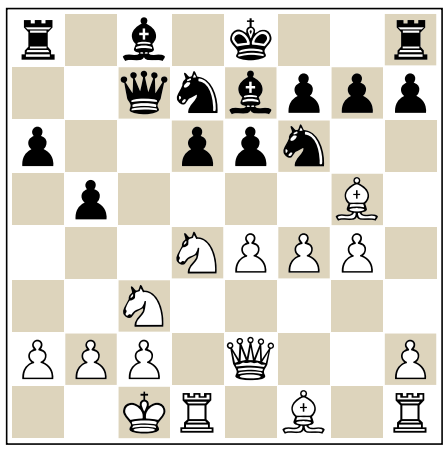


7.♕e2 White far more often prefers 7.f4 or 7.♗c4. Since 7.f4 ♕c7 most probably transposes, after 8.♕f3 e6, into well-known theoretical positions, while in the event of 7.♗c4 Black can choose between 7...♕b6 and 7...♕a5, I preferred to play with the queen on e2.

7...e6 8.f4 ♕c7 9.0-0-0 ♗e7

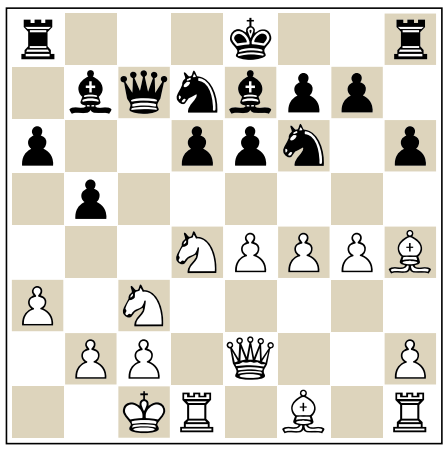
Black does not hurry with ...b5, allowing White an additional possibility – 10.♘f3, aiming for 11.e5, and thereby hindering the comfortable advance of the black b-pawn. On the other hand, after the immediate 9...b5 it may not to be everyone's taste to study the additional variations with 10.f5.

10.g4 b5



11.a3 Another nuance results from Black's delay in playing ...b5 – White can try to manage without the standard move a3 and play 11.♗g2!?. **11...♗b7 12.♗h4** The immediate 12.♗g2 has also occurred, but then the transition into an endgame after 12...♕c4 13.♕xc4 bxc4 14.h3 has less point for White, since Black has available the comfortable move 14...h5.

12...h6



A strong prophylactic move, preventing the black knight at f6 from being driven back.

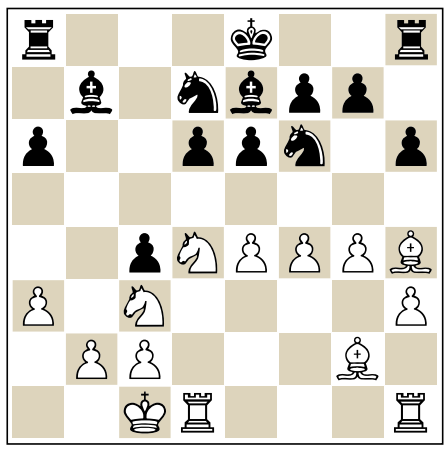
13.♗g2 I had already reached this position in a game that went 13.♖g1 ♖c8 (of course, the critical line is 13...g5 14.fxg5 ♘h7, as has already been demonstrated in Wang Hao-Li, Beijing 2009, where after 15.♗f2 hxg5 16.♘f3 ♘e5 17.♗d4 f6 18.h4 Black could have played 18...gxh4 19.♘xh4 ♘g5 with a good game) 14.♗e1 ♘b6 15.h4 d5 16.e5 ♘e4 17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.♗a5 ♗c5 19.♖g3, N.Kosintseva-Zivkovic, Kallithea 2008. And in the source game, in Budva 2009, after 13.♔b1 Areschenko responded well against Bosiocic: 13...♖c8 14.♗g2 ♕c4 15.♕e1 b4 16.axb4 ♕xb4 17.♖g1 g5 18.e5 dxe5 19.♗xb7 ♕xb7 20.fxe5 ♗b4 21.♘cb5 axb5 22.♕xb4 ♘d5, and Black went on to win.

13...♕c4 14.♕xc4

A novelty. I did not want to repeat a game of my sister Tatiana, who a few months ago preferred 14.♕e1 which after 14...b4 15.♗f1 ♕c5 16.♘b3 ♕b6 17.axb4 ♕xb4 18.♖d4 ♕b6 19.g5 hxg5 20.♗xg5 led to double-edged play, T.Kosintseva-Sebag, Rijeka 2010.

14...bxc4 15.h3

At first sight it is obvious that, thanks to the black pawn on c4, White's position should be slightly more pleasant, but just how significant this is, and whether White has real chances of fighting for an advantage in this endgame, are questions to which I still cannot give a definite reply.



15...♖c8 A sensible decision. Black covers her potentially weak pawn in advance, thereby not allowing the white pieces to approach it quickly and comfortably.

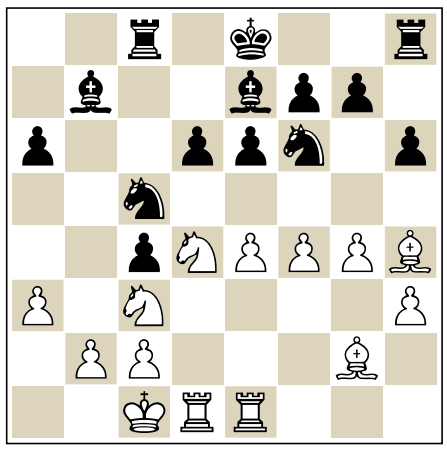
NEW IN CHESS

Nadezhda Kosintseva enjoys an animated talk with Alexander Moiseenko and Sergey Karjakin.

15...g5, a standard move in such endgames, suggested itself, but after 16.fxg5 ♘h7 17.♗g3 ♘xg5 18.♘de2 ♘e5 19.♘f4 0-0 20.♘h5 thanks to the expeditious manoeuvre of the knight to h5 White is guaranteed the initiative.

16.♖he1 ♘c5

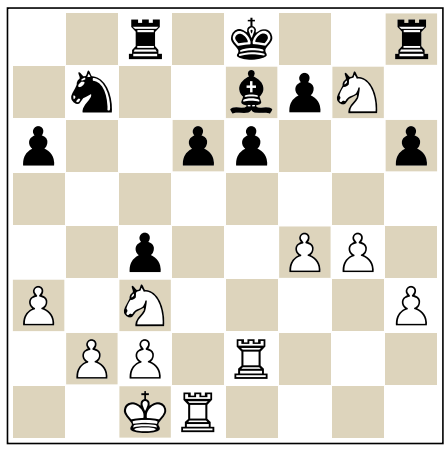
Here 16...g5 17.fxg5 ♘h7 18.♗g3 ♘xg5 (after 18...hxg5 19.♘f3 ♖c6 20.♘a2 the black pieces begin to feel extremely uncomfortable) would have encountered a pretty tactical idea: 19.h4 ♘h7 20.♘f5! exf5 21.exf5 ♗xg2 22.♗xd6 ♗f3 23.♖xe7+ ♔d8 24.♖d4 ♖g8 25.♗b4 ♘f6 26.g5 hxg5 27.♖e3! ♗c6 28.♗a5+ ♖c7 29.♖xc4 ♔c8 30.hxg5 ♖xg5 31.♘e2! with advantage. If 16...0-0 White has the unpleasant 17.♗f3 with the idea of e5 and numerous discovered threats.



17.♖e2 A key position. White makes a useful move, inviting Black to be the first to declare her intentions. There were two alternatives. White could have immediately clarified the situation by 17.f5 e5 or played 17.♔b1, another useful move.

17...♖g8?

In my view, a serious mistake! By making this move, Black hints at a subsequent g5, but this threat can be parried, and how she intends to connect her rooks is a big question. The critical line was 17...♘fxe4 18.♗xe4 ♗xh4 19.♘f5 ♗e7 20.♗xb7 ♘xb7 21.♘xg7+



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

21...♔d7! and White is unable to set Black any significant problems.

Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 – Women – performance ratings

					%	TPR
1	Inna Gaponenko	IM	UKR	2469	93.8	2691
2	Nadezhda Kosintseva	IM	RUS1	2565	85.0	2662
3	Ju Wenjun	WGM	CHN	2516	86.4	2636
4	Tatiana Kosintseva	IGM	RUS1	2573	70.0	2628
5	Zeinab Mamedjarova	WGM	AZE	2234	81.8	2623
6	Hou Yifan	IGM	CHN	2578	72.7	2573
7	Anastasia Bodnaruk	IM	RUS2	2399	87.5	2569
8	Nana Dzagnidze	IGM	GEO	2534	70.0	2563
9	Anna Muzychuk	IM	SLO	2535	70.0	2547
10	Elisabeth Pähtz	IM	GER	2467	72.2	2524
11	Yaniet Marrero Lopez	WGM	CUB	2324	87.5	2511
12	Pham Le Thao Nguyen	WIM	VIE	2304	85.0	2481
13	Salome Melia	IM	GEO	2439	70.0	2458
14	Anna Zatonskih	IM	USA	2480	65.0	2454

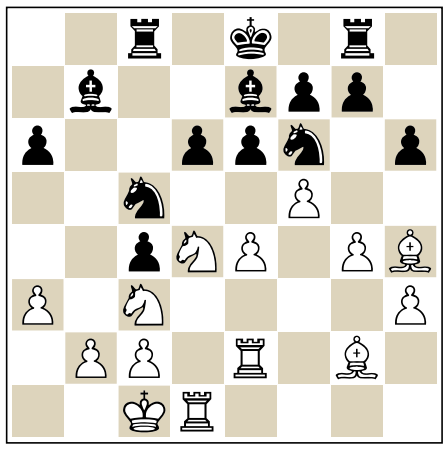
It would also have been interesting to consider the immediate 17...g5 18.fxg5 ♘fd7!, making use of the vacated square.

After 17...♘fd7 18.♗g3 0-0 White's hopes would be pinned on 19.h4 with the idea of g5.

18.f5

An interesting tactical skirmish could have arisen after 18.e5 ♗xg2 19.exf6 ♗xh3 20.♘f5! gxf6 21.♘d5, although these complications do not give White more than equality: 21...♗xg4 22.♘dxe7 ♗xe2 23.♘xg8 exf5 24.♖xd6.

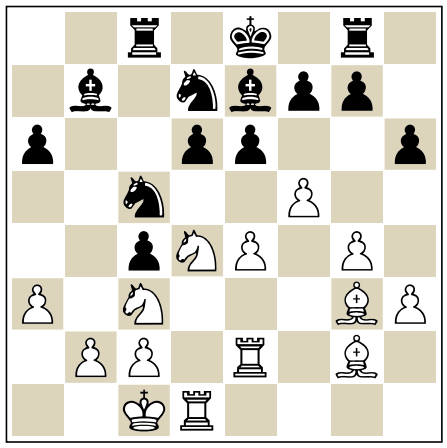
Meanwhile, another preparatory move deserved serious consideration: 18.♗g3!?, maintaining all the ideas for the future.



18...♘fd7

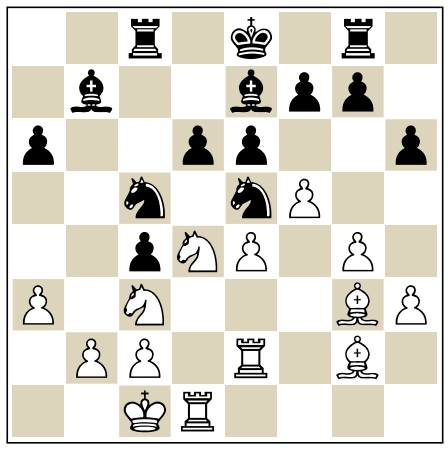
A typical Sicilian reaction to the f4-f5 advance: the black knight promptly responds to the weakening in the centre and heads directly for the outpost square e5.

19.♗g3



19...♘e5 In the event of 19...e5 20.♘f3 g6 21.♗e1 White has time to take measures against Black's comfortable play involving the undermining of the kingside: 21...h5 22.fxg6 fxg6 23.gxh5 gxh5 24.♗f1 ♘e6 25.♖f2 with a slight advantage to White. **20.♘f3 ♘cd7 21.♘d4** The correct line was 21.♘xe5 ♘xe5 22.♔b1, emphasizing the uncoordinated state of the black pieces with the possible further plan of ♖ed2 and ♘e2-d4.

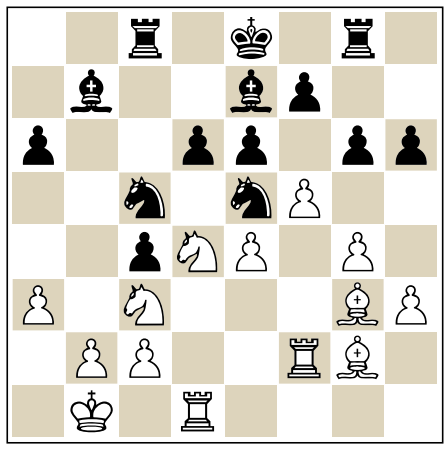
21...♘c5 Objectively the correct decision was to repeat the position once more, and then return to the idea mentioned in the note to White's 21st move, since all the same it is hard to think of anything apart from ♘f3, but it is far more important to hinder the comfortable development of the black pieces.

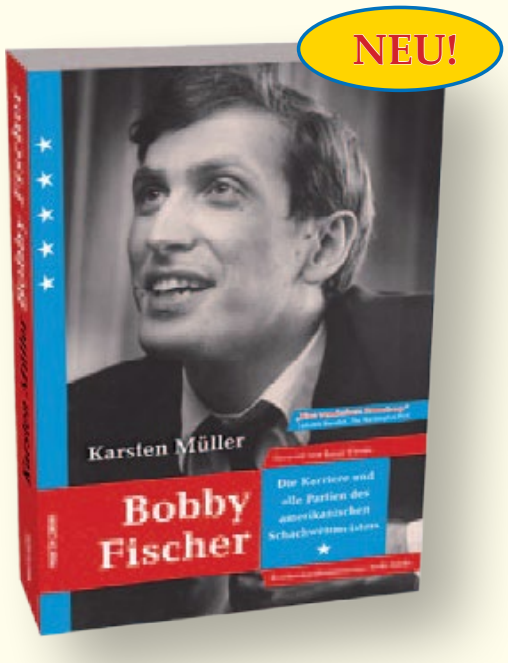


22.♔b1?! g6?!

Another help for White. Black's desire to give some point to the rook on g8 is understandable, but it was more important first to complete her development. Thus after 22...♗f6 23.♘f3 ♔e7 Black comfortably succeeds in connecting her rooks.

23.♖f2





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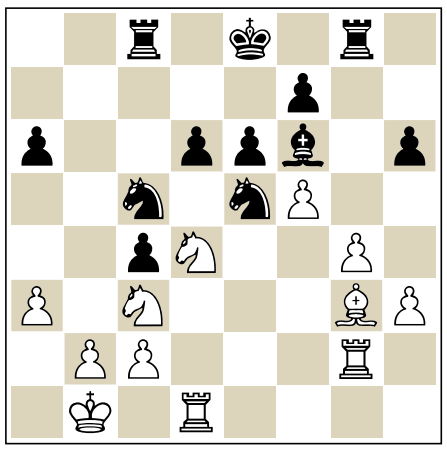
23...gxf5?

And this is already a serious mistake. Black is afraid of f5-f6, but she opens lines with her king insecure, merely aggravating her position.

The defensive 23...♘ed7 was best, when there could have followed 24.fxe6 fxe6 25.♘f3 e5 26.♘d2 ♘b6 27.♗f1 ♖f8 28.h4 with a white edge.

24.exf5 ♗xg2 25.♖xg2 ♗f6



26.♗f4

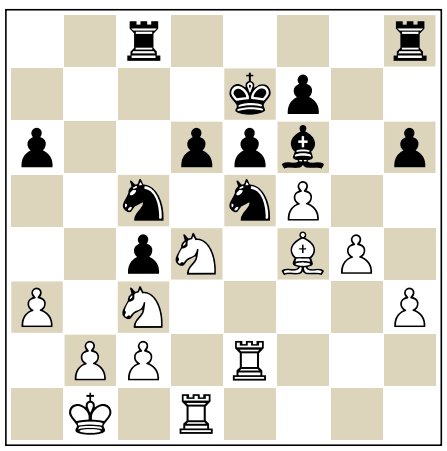
White does not immediately notice the correct idea – 26.♖e2!, with the threat of 27.fxe6 fxe6 28.♘xe6 ♘xe6 29.♖xd6, when Black loses material. And if 26...♔e7, then again 27.fxe6 fxe6 28.♘f5+ exf5 29.♘d5+ ♔f7 30.♘xf6.

26...♖h8

The computer recommends 26...h5 27.g5 ♘c6 as being the strongest. But here too after 28.♘de2 d5 29.♗e3 White continues attacking actively.

27.♖e2 ♔e7

Black also loses material after 27...♘ed3 28.♗xd6 ♗xd4 29.♗xc5 ♗xc3 30.cxd3 ♖xc5 31.bxc3 cxd3 32.♖xd3.



Khanty-Mansiysk 2010 – Women

		Pts	Tb
1	Russia 1	22	439.5
2	China	18	386.5
3	Georgia	16	384.0
4	Cuba	16	348.5
5	United States	16	336.5
6	Poland	16	336.0
7	Azerbaijan	16	320.0
8	Bulgaria	16	296.5
9	Ukraine	15	366.5
10	Russia 2	15	335.5
11	Armenia	15	327.5
12	Greece	15	316.0
13	Romania	15	312.5
14	Russia 3	15	287.0
15	Hungary	14	320.5
16	France	14	314.0
17	India	14	313.5
18	Vietnam	14	278.0
19	Iran	14	276.0
20	Lithuania	14	261.5
21	England	14	257.5
22	Croatia	14	257.5
23	Peru	14	246.5
24	Slovakia	13	317.5
25	Germany	13	313.5
26	Serbia	13	304.0
27	Israel	13	290.0
28	Netherlands	13	279.5
29	Kazakhstan	13	279.5
30	Uzbekistan	13	277.5
31	Latvia	13	263.5
32	Slovenia	13	257.5

115 teams, 11 rounds

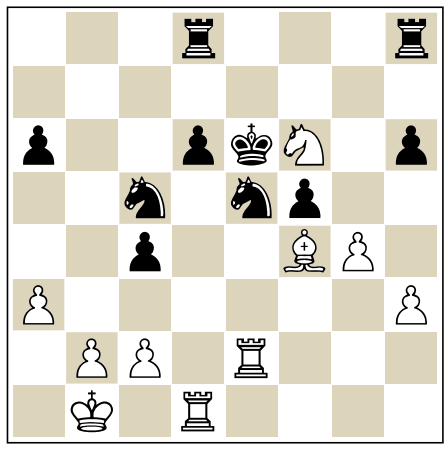
28.fxe6 There was also another, less obvious way: 28.♘f3 ♖cd8 29.♖f1! ♘xf3 30.♘d5+.

28...fxe6 29.♘f5+ exf5 30.♘d5+ ♔e6

After 30...♔f7 31.♘xf6 ♘g6 there is the strong 32.♗xd6! ♔xf6 33.gxf5, when 33...♔xf5 is not possible in view of 34.♖f1+ ♔g5 35.♖g2+ ♔h4 36.♖g4+ ♔xh3 37.♖xg6 with mate.

31.♘xf6 ♖cd8

Black loses quickly after 31...♔xf6 32.♖xd6+ ♔e7 33.♗xe5. Her position is also unpleasant after 31...fxg4 32.♗xe5 dxe5 33.♘xg4 e4 34.♖ed2 ♖c6 35.♖d5.



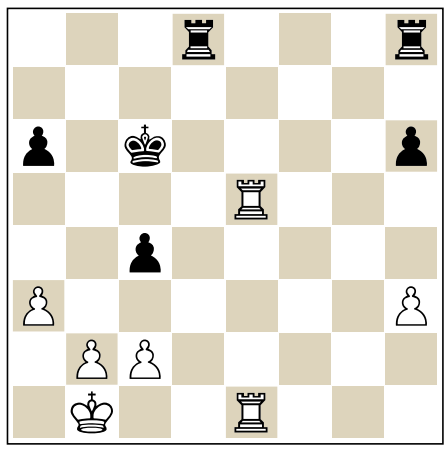
32.gxf5+? Stronger was 32.♘d5 fxg4 33.hxg4 with the threat of ♘c7 followed by the winning of material on the queenside.

32...♔xf5?

With both players short of time, Black returns the favour. It was essential to play 32...♔xf6 33.♖xd6+ ♖xd6 34.♗xe5+ ♔xf5 35.♗xd6 ♘e4, with active pieces as compensation for the lost pawn.

33.♖f1 Again 33.♘d5 looks quite good: 33...♘e6 34.♗xe5 dxe5 35.♘e3+ ♔f6 36.♖f1+ ♘f4 37.♘g4+ ♔g7 38.♖xe5 and wins.

33...♔e6 34.♘g4 ♘d7 35.♖fe1 ♔d5 36.♗xe5 dxe5 37.♘xe5 ♘xe5 38.♖xe5+ ♔c6

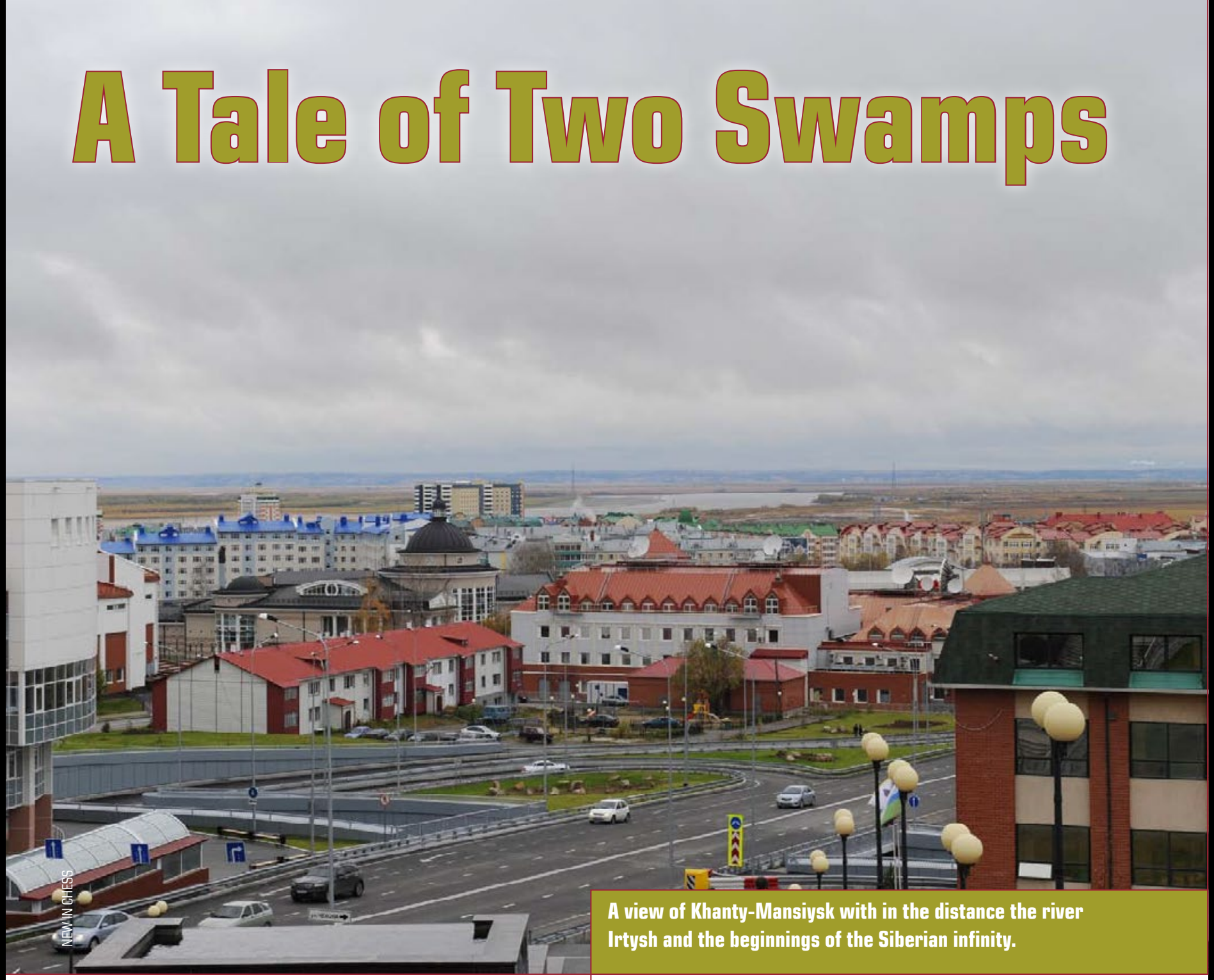


The position is objectively hopeless for Black. There followed:

39.♖1e4 c3 40.b4 ♖d1+ 41.♔a2 ♖hd8 42.♖c5+ ♔b6 43.♖e6+ ♖8d6 44.♖xd6+ ♖xd6 45.♖xc3 a5 46.♔b3 ♖g6 47.♖e3 axb4 48.axb4 h5 49.c3 ♖g5 50.♖e6+ ♔c7 51.♖h6 ♖f5 52.h4 ♖e5 53.c4 ♖f5 54.b5 ♔b7 55.♔b4 ♖e5 56.♖h7+ ♔c8 57.b6 ♖f5 58.c5 ♖f4+ 59.♔b5 ♖xh4 60.♔c6

Black resigned.

A Tale of Two Swamps



A view of Khanty-Mansiysk with in the distance the river Irtysh and the beginnings of the Siberian infinity.

A light workload standing in as Bermuda's non-playing captain allowed **Graham Hillyard** to take a tour of the Khanty-Mansiysk scene.

For professionals on fat appearance fees and full travel expenses an Olympiad in an oil town somewhere on the West Siberian Plain is just so much time at the office. But amateurs using annual leave and their own cash to journey to the heart of a million square miles of swampland may take a less sanguine view. Especially if they are engulfed in the gathering landslide of chaos and anger triggered by the organisers' constant rescheduling of the charters from Europe, and have paid more rebooking fees on their connections than they care to remember.

On arrival at their accommodation in Khanty-Mansiysk they learn they are entitled to two weeks' hotel buffets. The alternatives in town turn out to be restaurants charging $100 for a bottle of mediocre wine. For social life there are no alternatives at all to the premium-rate prices in the hotel bars.

The thought nags at the amateur that this is also a vacation. There should be more to his experience of this exotic destination than shuttling between the hotel and the playing venue. A little sightseeing perhaps? A brochure suggests that excursions will be even more ruinous than an evening's drinking, and possibly less rewarding:

Entertainment Program 'Initiation in the Siberians'... The entertainers in national costumes welcome you to participate in... jumping over a dog-sledge... cabbage cutting, walking through a fake swamp, sacks fight, tug-of-war etc. The final point of the program is awarding special 'Certificate of a Siberian'...

It will all be over in an hour, leaving the participants to divide up the $900 cost – and find another $4 each for the certificates. The visitor vaguely wonders why, if vast bogs lie all about, people pay to wade through fake ones. Then he realises that they

don't. These 'excursions' have been devised for the Olympiad.

A leaflet invites him to take part in the *All-Russian Run Day 'Cross Country Race of Nation 2010'*. This unappealing proposal is in any case ruled out by Run Day coinciding with Recovery Day – the one after the Bermuda Party.

He heads over to the restaurant, where jars of instant coffee stand next to gleaming samovars and a pastiche of the 1812 Overture segues into the Godfather theme. The latter will be played often during buffets – is its link to modern Russia's reputation coincidental, or do the locals do a decent line in irony?

In his room there is no escape from Russia's quirks. On the door is a no-smoking sign and on the table an ashtray, and in the bottom of the ashtray another no-smoking sign. He gives up trying to work this out and finds a UK snooker tournament on TV, with the commentary in Russian and commercials for high-powered weapons between the frames.

His thoughts drift uneasily to the uniformed men standing around all day and night in lobbies and car parks. There is something ominous about their watchfulness. Are they the fixtures and fittings of a country that has always embraced authoritarianism, or the Olympiad's protection against terrorist attack?

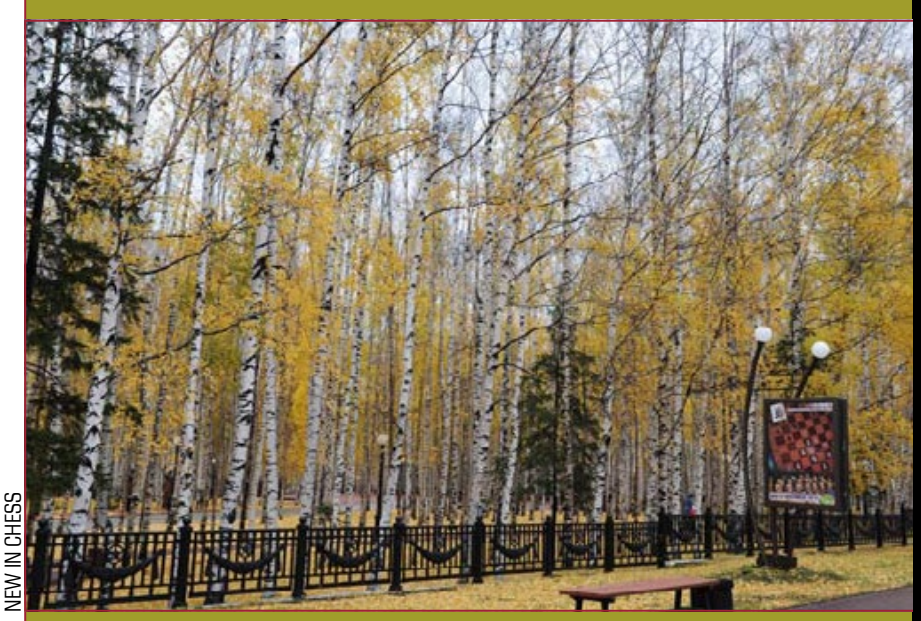
The professional takes all this in his stride. The amateur may wonder what on earth he is doing in this place.

But whether it was shrewd calculation or just the organisers' good fortune, the Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad found itself getting a positive press. Many players arrived expecting billetings in university dormitories and zero-tolerance defaults from failed transport links. Others recalled the Moscow 94 Olympiad where they claimed the Russians themselves refused to eat the food. But when disaster is expected any other result is greeted with relief and delight. The discovery the main hotel was up and running and the buffet food was edible brought outpourings of praise.

Frustrations that would have been aired on other occasions were played down or ignored. As well as the lack of social opportunities outside the hotels there were the tedious bus journeys and the difficulties of communication. Simple enquiries at reception desks or to drivers were often impossible. The girls assigned as 'tutors' to each team were friendly and helpful and spoke good English, but most came from Surgut, a city five hours away that was better able to supply language students on the scale required by the Olympiad. Many of the Surgut girls were in Khanty-Mansiysk for the first time, and knew nothing about the town.

The War Memorial in Victory Park with the names of 3500 victims of World War II.

The large hall accommodated the lower teams. With their badges they didn't have access to the hall where the top teams played.



Towards the end of the Olympiad most of the leaves had gone, but the autumn colours remained dazzling.

At the venue one basic annoyance affected professional and amateur alike. 1800 and 2800 were both promptly expelled from the playing area when their game finished. These deportations led to some encounters in the lower reaches being prolonged by mutual consent beyond their natural span, so that players could hang on to the access badges which the arbiters would grab as soon as they shook hands. Games on this sort of artificial life-support could be

identified by a clock running, a position where one side was a rook up, and the absence of both players. They were spectating while they still could.

When the flight problems came up in conversation FIDE treasurer Nigel Freeman, a henchman of President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, frequently responded that 'You can't do anything about charter companies' – without ever saying why this was. He probably did not want to embarrass his hosts. Chess blogger Gary O'Grady, whose business encompasses transport operations to Russia, explained that Russian air traffic control is a branch of the military and a law unto itself, and that no charter flight can enter Russian air space until bribes are paid.

By the second week, with temperatures across the great bogland dropping and the stench from the indoor swamp of FIDE politics rising, there were a fair number who simply wanted the Olympiad to be the same as the Canadian women's board 4: Orlova. But others had warmed slightly to Khanty-Mansiysk.

It is not one of those places where you find yourself thinking after a while: 'How charming. I might retire here.' But the autumn colours were dazzling, and around town there were many attractive old wooden chalets reminiscent of northern Europe. Alongside some interesting modern architecture were other recent structures that were unashamedly traditional. At the end of Komsomolskaya Street, opposite the main hospital, a colourful church of burnished timbers, bright blue roof tiles and golden domes proclaimed its birth date of 20 August 1994 in ornamental lettering.

China and India impress by the quantity of their living, Russia by the numbers of its dead. The centrepiece of a serenely beautiful park of towering birches in the town centre, carpeted at this time of year in brilliant yellow, was a long curving memorial inscribed with some 3500 names. From Ababkov to Yashkin they filled more than forty columns. The numbing thought occurred that this monument was, as it were, only the square root of Russia's holocaust. To list all its military losses in World War II every one of those names would have to be joined by 3500 others.

But if it was possible to explore the town and even get to like it a little, this was less the case with the Olympiad. Access restrictions between the playing halls together with the post-game expulsions prevented players engaging with the wider event in which they were participating. The only type of player well served by the system was one who had no interest in anything except his own game and was happy to leave the building as soon as it finished.

Captains were better off as they were not subject to expulsion, even when their team had finished, and they could move between the playing halls despite the apartheid system brought in following, it was said, a complaint from Kramnik. Different-colour playing-area badges now barred the lower orders in the large hall from peering over the shoulders of their betters in the small one.

In fact the best way to circulate freely and try to get an overview of a modern Olympiad – as long as you are not absolutely hell-bent on playing chess – is to be a non-playing captain. And preferably of one of the small nations who within three or four rounds sink to the tournament seabed and spend the rest of the event trying to gouge a point or two out of other bottom-feeders. Such sides have few pretensions chess-wise but they tend to be good company (Papua New Guinea take the social gold medal) and rarely seem to make a captain's life difficult.

These lowly teams may be the invertebrates of chess evolution but they are very much the backbone of Olympiads. They are the loyal core who spend their own money to be there, and by their presence give the event its universality. And they deserve better than places like Khanty-Mansiysk.

Few external demands are made of captains beyond their attendance at a meeting at the start of the event. This was chaired by Serbian chief arbiter Sava Stoisavljevic and squeezed in before the opening ceremony. When the hated zero-tolerance rule came up, Werner Stubenvoll of FIDE's Technical Administration Panel shouted from the podium that they had no powers to vary what had been decided in the General Assembly. Of course it is normal enough to hear elderly Austrians like Herr Stubenvoll claim that they were only following orders.

Various requests for clarification received ambiguous responses, and when Ms Stoisavljevic was grilled on the criteria she would use to award 0-0 to early draws she eventually admitted it would be a purely subjective decision. By the end of the meeting the only thing she had explained efficiently was why the words arbiter and arbitrary have a common origin.

Her squad of officials turned out to contain many whose language abilities were insufficient for an international event. Translators, especially those with little knowledge of chess, are no substitute.

Of course the inadequacies of some arbiters were more than linguistic. There was the inevitable quota of micro-Stalins, and among these one Vladimir Vodnitskiy stood out. His achievements included motioning to Aruba's top player that he could not remain sitting at the board while it was his opponent's move. The Aruba player had no idea why this was as Mr Vodnitskiy could not speak a word of English.

The 'explanation' came later that afternoon when

NEW IN CHESS

On the final day of the Olympiad the deserted Karpov stand was used for an impromptu meeting by FIDE board members Israel Gelfer, Georgios Makropoulos and Nigel Freeman.

translators and senior officials were called to a heated touch-move dispute in the adjoining Haiti-Sierra Leone match which Mr Vodnitskiy was again linguistically incapable of resolving. Via the translators it was learned that he had sought to punish the Aruba player for tying his shoelace, which he had interpreted as a distraction attempt. Unsurprisingly the Aruba player's opponent said he had not even noticed.

The arbiters are not the only outlandish specimens floating around in the depths. Sometimes even whole teams bear the stamp of eccentricity. Up near the surface most sides contain nothing but chess professionals, but at full fathom five Bermuda were fielding a gunshot surgeon, a psychologist, a convicted murderer, a financier and a petrol pump attendant. The murderer had replaced a Dresden team member who also had a homicide conviction – albeit only as an accessory.

Ivanchuk is the best-known practising eccentric among the 2700+ species, but there is the occasional flash of oddity from elsewhere, like Magnus Carlsen's off-board examples of the competitive spirit necessary to forge a champion. Bermuda player Nick Faulks related that during a game of beach football at the Calvia Olympiad Carlsen had tackled the Norwegian girl chaperoning him so hard that she was left using a walking stick. At Dresden he left the hotel lobby in a sulk after losing to the Norwegian women's team at cards.

At the board Carlsen wears the usual professional mask. He resigned to Adams with an expression of studied nonchalance. But there is an odd detail to his physical play. He may be the only top-level player who does not make his moves cleanly. There is often a bobble or twitch as he places a piece on a square.

A few yards from where Carlsen was resigning to Adams, Kramnik sat crumpled alongside his game with Navara. His head hung down against his chest, below the board. He could have been sleeping, except that his eyes were clenched shut rather than just closed. The face muscles flickered, and he lurched up into something like a normal position, planting his elbows. A few seconds later his head slumped again, this time onto the table itself. Was he tired? In pain? Bored to death? Analysing? It was hard to say, but shortly after this piece of theatre the game was drawn. Perhaps it was as well Mr Vodnitskiy was not officiating.

This was the second Monday, just two days before the presidential election. Out in the lobby of the playing venue the Great Leader and his challenger had their election stands. Ilyumzhinov had installed banks of computers to provide internet access for the public, while Karpov had hired a bevy of models to stand around pouting. Karpov was rarely present, but the Alien's Friend had often been seen manning his stand. One afternoon he had cut a rather forlorn figure, alone in the middle of his booth, ignored by those bustling past to get to a computer, his expression somewhere between inscrutable and vacant.

He had an even stranger look on his face on the front cover of a brochure distributed to delegates as part of a gift pack. Wearing his usual suit he was squatting in the middle of a steppe clutching some tulips. He was probably trying to appear earnest but his expression was pained and uncomfortable. More tulips receded over the grassland towards a remote horizon, and across the sky was blazoned 'KIRSAN – 15 YEARS OF SUCCESS'.

A sentence in this brochure seems to go to the heart of the problem: 'FIDE is an open, transparent democratic institution with one vote for each federation.' But it is clearly a travesty of democracy that a del-

egate from a federation with a few dozen members has the same voting powers as a delegate representing thousands. No genuine democracy tolerates such a system, which is little different from the 'rotten boroughs' (places with few or no electors which still returned members of parliament) abolished in Britain as long ago as 1832.

The public seemed grateful for the Internet use, but Ilyumzhinov perhaps worried that his cyber cafe was being upstaged by Karpov's catwalk. At any rate there arrived around now a counter-harem of Kalmyk handmaidens, arrayed in traditional finery, who took up their station in front of the stand. A statuesque but meaningless presence, they were also ignored by those trying to get to a computer.

It had seemed fifty-fifty whether FIDE would have another go at drug-testing Ivanchuk. On the one hand they would not want to risk a repeat of the Dresden fiasco. On the other it might be necessary to show the International Olympic Committee that Ivanchuk was 'clean' and that FIDE was not 'soft'. The odds changed that Monday evening when a FIDE official, flushed and excited at the news of victory over Karpov in the Lausanne court, announced in the Olimpiyskaya bar that 'we're going after Ivanchuk again'.

Arriving from a long session with the African delegates, Treasurer Freeman expressed distaste for the way he had been obliged to do business. What did he mean – had they all simply walked in and held out their hands for a bribe? 'No,' he replied, 'their hands were out before they came through the door.'

As the election approached, the rumour engine changed up through the gears. The Ethiopian delegate was said to have been sent home for his own safety after taking money from both sides. He was unlikely to have been alone in this, but he was the only one who did not manage to impose a news blackout.

CJ de Mooi, star of a British TV quiz show and president of the English Chess Federation, was present to campaign for Karpov. On election eve he sat in the bar of the Olimpiyskaya expressing disappointment at the way things were going. 'Karpov knew my requirements,' he said, scanning the faces around him dejectedly. He had been hoping to meet some attractive young Russian men in the course of his visit, but Karpov had not shown his gratitude by organising any introductions, and CJ was now reduced to attempts at making his own arrangements.

Under the table he had a stash of Karpov bribe kits containing an assortment of items designed to sway delegates. The most talked-about of these was the 'Karpov vodka', which carried a portrait of the candidate. Over the years the Great Leader had handed out industrial quantities of his own brand, but this was Karpov's first appearance bottle-side. CJ alternated bribe-dispensing sorties around the bar with more personally motivated forays.

The surprise on election day was not the result but Bermuda's successful testing of a new type of anti-personnel weapon in the General Assembly. The detonation of 66-year-old delegate Larry Ebbin caught Kasparov in its blast wave and was on YouTube and the Moscow front pages the next day. Ebbin later said the Great Leader was going to reward his loyalty with a press conference in Moscow on his way home.

Jon Speelman explained at dinner that he had been flown out by FIDE to help in any drug-testing situation where a target might be calmed by the presence of a known and respected figure. He was working with FIDE doping supremo Dr Jana Bellin. Rather surprisingly he said they both shared the view of the vast majority of players and were against drug testing. His position seemed to be that if drug testing was inevitable – because it enables some federations to claim state funds – then it was better it was carried out by people like Dr Bellin who were sympathetic to the players. But he did not hide the ambivalence he felt about his role.

'Kirsan's already in election mode for Kasparov in 2014'

With all the brouhaha over the election it was possible to forget that the game occasionally crosses the path of real politics. This is normally when an Arab team refuses to play Israel, but it was also interesting to observe how the women's event could function as a rough-and-ready indicator of geopolitical threat levels. Even if you knew nothing about the countries concerned, you could correctly predict from the all-western dress of the Tunisian women that their country is a low-level threat terrorism-wise, and from the top-to-toe swathing of the Yemeni women that their country is high-risk.

Other profiles were more complex but still revealing. One team's members usually went about in western clothes but donned headscarves at the board, where they knew they might be photographed. Their

fear was the key – their repressive and deeply riven country is dangerously unpredictable.

The period immediately after the election was marked by a frenzy of activity in the Olympiad's Financial Office. As time ran out, players tried to recover visa and flight rebooking fees. Receipts were insisted upon, but most players had not brought them, and no receipts could exist anyway for the flight changes which had had to be made by phone during the Olympiad itself.

The conclusion of Ivanchuk's game with Vachier-Lagrave on Friday 1 October was interesting not just for what was happening on the board but also because Speelman and Dr Bellin were hovering in the background. This was no surprise. It was the penultimate round, and Dr Bellin would be unlikely to leave the test to the last game, as had happened in Dresden. Speelman had not yet had to go into action, but today was the big one...

By a freak of probability Dr Bellin had twice in a row preselected for testing what turned out to be one of the last games to finish. The previous day it had been a women's match in the large hall. Today Ivanchuk and Vachier-Lagrave were the last combatants in the smaller venue.

To Speelman's relief he was not needed. Tukmakov, Ivanchuk's captain, seemed to be in the know, and did the talking for Dr Bellin. Ivanchuk looked put out but in the end – disappointingly – appeared to go quietly.

But how smoothly did it really go? It was 8.30 when Ivanchuk was led away, and an exhausted-looking Dr Bellin arrived for dinner at the Olimpiyskaya just before 10. This was much longer than the previous day's test had taken. It was good to think that maybe Ivanchuk had put up a fight after all. But unlike some of her colleagues Dr Bellin is a model of professionalism. There was no point asking her. She was in any case in a bad enough mood after hearing of Monday evening's announcement in the bar.

By now it had even been possible to identify an excursion that seemed less vacuous and overpriced than the others – the 15km trip by small river steamer along the Irtysh to its confluence with the Ob. Together they form Russia's longest river system, and the world's seventh. It was a chance to glimpse the beginnings of the Siberian infinity and a landscape linked to two major but contrasting conjectures – the freezing-over of northern Europe if excess freshwater in the Arctic Ocean from swollen Siberian rivers and Greenland icecaps halts the Gulf Stream, and apocalyptic planetary overheating if Siberia's frozen wetlands and peat bogs release their methane.

As the boat chugged downstream there looked to be evidence of the floods connected to the former in the many trees torn from higher up the sludge-coloured banks of the Irtysh. It was a cold day, and colder on the water, but better than being handed a certificate for cutting a cabbage.

After Sunday's closing ceremony a party was held for all participants in a huge exhibition space on the far side of town near the playing venue. The buses waiting outside the closing ceremony only seemed to be going to the party. Those who were tired and wanted to return to their hotels were out of luck. It looked as if the Great Leader wanted a crowd, and was abducting one.

He appeared on a small stage in a corner of the hangar-like interior accompanied by a brass chamber orchestra. The ceremony that followed was interrupted every few minutes by a portentous fanfare. What was going on remained a mystery as the sound system put paid to the English translation. In any case there was food, drink and company, and few were giving any heed to the tiny figure in the distance other than to express irritation at the noise. FIDE's president was, as so often, being ignored.

Some had wanted him to win the election in the hope that he could be persuaded to stand down, or even be ousted, before his new term was up. At the party Nigel Freeman made it clear this was unlikely. 'Kirsan's already in election mode for Kasparov in 2014,' he said, adding ominously: 'And he says he's going to dedicate himself 25 hours a day to chess.'

Freeman remarked that he himself was not going to be a popular figure among the federations from which he would try to recover the million euros in legal fees that Lausanne had cost FIDE. This was stating the obvious, but he was making the point that he wouldn't shrink from going after the money. Asked if those federations wouldn't just melt away or bog things down in years of legal disputes, he said their FIDE membership could be suspended until they paid. But wouldn't that encourage them to form a breakaway organisation? Freeman looked unhappy but was candid: 'We don't have any choice. They're getting their legal fees pro bono [free]. If they hit us with another case next year and another the year after that they'll wipe us out.'

The next day the first of the charters which had so bedevilled the Olympiad climbed over the Ob-Irtysh confluence and into the clouds. Within an hour or two it would reach the Urals and be clear of the world's largest wetland, the West Siberian Plain. But it was starting to look as if the Great Leader and his crew would be floundering in the middle of their own swamp for some time to come.

Luck played a role, but so did creativeness, resilience and strong motivation. Alexey Shirov won the first stage of the 2010 Grand Slam Masters Final, held in the first week of September in Shanghai on the eve of the Olympiad. With his victory he qualified for the second and final stage in Bilbao to be held immediately after Khanty-Mansiysk. In Bilbao, World Champion Vishy Anand and world number one Magnus Carlsen are seeded players. The fourth participant will be Vladimir Kramnik, who defeated Levon Aronian in a blitz play-off for second place in Shanghai. A report from the Spanish Pavilion at the Shanghai Expo and the famous Lu Bo Lang Club by **Peter Doggers**.

SHIROV shines in Shanghai

Chess tournaments come in all shapes and sizes, but the structure of the 2010 Masters Final was pretty unique. This year the tournament was split into two parts and held not only in Bilbao, the location of the first two editions, but also in Shanghai, China. Because of the Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk there were exactly 30 days between the last round of Part 1 and the first round of Part 2. The first question to answer is, of course: how on earth did part of this chess tournament end up in Shanghai?

The idea arose about two years ago and had everything to do with the World Expo in Shanghai. In terms of social and economic impact the Expo is the third-largest event on the planet after the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup. Besides 190 coun-

DAVID LLADA

You'd swear he is pictured in front of a poster of the Shanghai Tourist Office, but he is not. Alexey Shirov is standing on the terrace of the Lu Bo Lang Club with a spectacular view of the Yuyuan Garden and the Shanghai skyline.

tries and over 50 organizations, the Expo includes many corporations and cities. In 2008, the city of Bilbao was invited to have an individual representation in the Urban Best Practices Area of the Expo. The Basque city had earned its presence due to its swift modernization during the past few decades, giving meaning to the Expo's motto 'Better City, Better Life'. The invitation inspired Andoni Madariaga, coordinator of the Grand Slam Masters Final but also working for the municipality of Bilbao, to develop the idea of combining Bilbao's presence in Shanghai with chess.

Talks were initiated between the Spaniards – or rather Basques – and the Chinese Chess Association, while in the meantime, the first two editions of the Masters Final were held in the famous glass cube at the Plaza Nueva in Bilbao in 2008 and 2009 and were won by Veselin Topalov and Levon Aronian respectively. During this year's Corus tournament the Grand Slam Association announced the two venues of Shanghai and Bilbao, and in subsequent months the event materialized.

In early August the organizers proudly announced their list of participants: Levon Aronian, Vladimir Kramnik, Alexey Shirov and Wang Hao for the first stage; Viswanathan Anand and Magnus Carlsen as seeded players for the second one. This left some questions. There was no doubt about Carlsen, who had won all three Grand Slam tournaments he had played in. Anand is World Champion and Kramnik and Shirov might have earned their spots thanks to a shared second place in Wijk aan Zee. But what about the rest? The official press release explained: Wang Hao was in as 'best Chinese player', Shirov as 'best Spanish player', Aronian as 'winner of the Final Chess Masters 2009' and Kramnik as 'fourth in the world rankings'.

The players seemed as bemused by this clarification as the chess fans. On a Russian Internet forum Shirov said: 'As I understand it from the press releases, they decided not to take the second places in the tournaments into account at all, which is why Grischuk isn't there. So Kramnik got in by rating and I got in as a Spaniard, seeing as the final is in Bilbao. Of course it's strange to play in Shanghai on the strength of those criteria, and not in Bilbao itself, but I've got nothing against it personally. I've never been to China ☺.'

The first three rounds of the Shanghai leg were held in the Spanish pavilion at the World Expo. Thanks to the support of the Chinese Chess Association the last three could take place right next to the world-famous Yuyuan Garden in Shanghai's Old Town. Madariaga's original idea had been to place a glass cube there, but this proved too complicated for financial reasons and even more so because of security issues.

Talking about financial reasons, the reader may recall the decrease of the Grand Slam Final prize-money in 2009, which caused Veselin Topalov to decline his invitation. With an ongoing global financial crisis hitting the Spanish economy hard, it was a small miracle that this third edition came off the ground to begin with. This time there was no prize-money at all, only starting fees. How high they were was not revealed. The tournament had a few big sponsors, but it was also partly funded by about 20 small companies from the Bilbao region. The Chinese didn't give any financial support, but they assisted in almost everything else, especially during the last three rounds. Once the tournament moved into 'Chinese territory', the Chinese took charge of the proceedings and everything went a bit more smoothly.

The Chinese also assisted in organizing several business meetings for the Basque sponsors, who travelled to China in a group of about 40. The whole delegation, including the players, stayed at the Grand Melia Hotel in central Pudong. This district, located east of the Huangpu river, is about one and a half times as big as urban Shanghai and well-known for its panorama of skyscrapers. Especially at night a stroll through the neighbourhood feels like a walk in the future, in which not just the streets, but also the clouds are lit up by the many tall buildings. The most famous are the beautiful twin formed by the Jinmao Tower (421m) and the Shanghai World Financial Center (492m), and of course the Oriental Pearl Tower, the most iconic building of the city (468m).

From the hotel it took about 25 minutes by car to reach the Expo. It fills an area of more than five square kilometres with dozens of museum-like pavilions, beautifully designed and dedicated to countries, continents and organizations. After reaching the entrance the players and organizers had to walk for about 15 minutes to reach the Spanish pavilion, passing the ones of Thailand, Australia, Kazakhstan, Serbia and Belgium along the way. This walk

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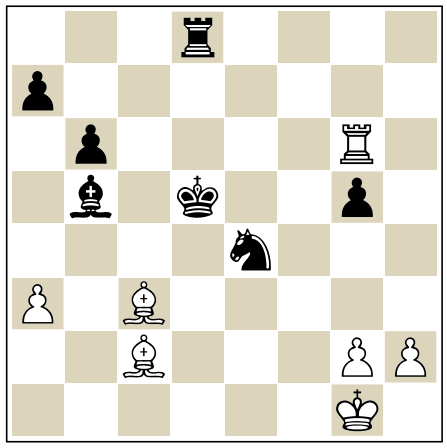
The playing room at the Lu Bo Lang Club, where Rounds 4 to 6 were played.

was an arduous task in the Shanghai heat – or rather, humidity. For three days the players sweated heavily before even making a single move.

The playing hall was a spacious room on the first floor of the pavilion and part of a business centre. This may be called a preparation error on the part of the organizers, since this area was not accessible to Expo visitors. The result was that despite thousands and thousands of people queuing for hours to enter the pavilions just metres away, the 40 spectator seats in the playing hall remained mostly empty. Besides a handful of invited guests, only Shirov's wife and his second Mikhail Rychagov would be there, every day and for most of the games. They had every reason to closely follow the efforts of their man, who was in danger many times, but emerged as the winner.

In the first round Shirov was under serious pressure against Kramnik, but the Russian saw his winning chances evaporate just before the time-control.



Kramnik-Shirov
position after 38...♘e4

39.♗b4?! The immediate 39.♗xe4+ ♔xe4 40.♖xg5 would still give excellent winning chances, according to Kramnik.
39...♖c8 40.♗xe4+ ♔xe4 41.♖xg5 ♖c1+ 42.♔f2 ♖c2+ 43.♔e1
The big difference is that 43.♔g3 fails to 43...♗f1!, which is what Kramnik had missed when playing his 39th move.
43...♗d3 44.h4 a5 45.♗d6 ♔e3
And Black drew easily.

In this first round Levon Aronian played his first classical game since February. After Linares the Armenian had only played in a few rapid tournaments and he was 'very happy to return to chess', as he put it. His win against Wang Hao no doubt helped to boost his confidence. The Chinese missed a good chance in the middlegame but then played several inaccurate moves in time-trouble.

This game was one of many in Shanghai in which big mistakes were made just before move 40. The rate of play was 90 minutes for the first 40 moves and then 60 minutes to finish the game, with 10 extra seconds per move *from move 41*. This time-control was also used at the first two tournaments in Bilbao, as was the 'football score' (3 points for a win, 1 for a draw). After three tournaments there still doesn't seem to be a good reason to use either system... In an interview after the tournament Kramnik described the time-control in Shanghai as 'somewhere between rapid and classical chess'.

After his draw with Shirov in Round 2 Aronian lamented: 'It's the usual, you know. You get an interesting position and then you don't have enough time to really figure out what is happening.'

This game saw two small incidents. When Aronian played his 40th move, the display on his clock automatically changed to '01.00' (a full hour for the rest of the game) because the clock had counted that it had been pressed 40 times. Shirov briefly thought his opponent had lost on time and pointed at the clock, but then quickly played his own 40th move to avoid losing on time himself.

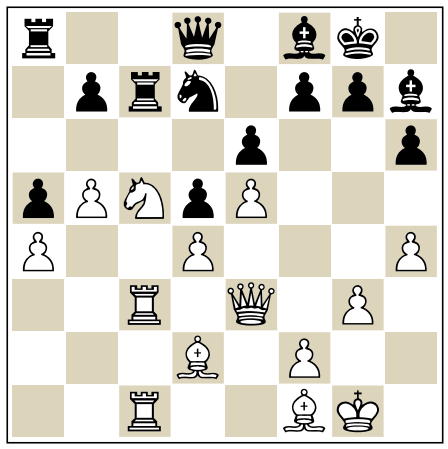
Then, after Aronian had written down all his moves on his score-sheet, he wanted to go to the bathroom to freshen up. However, because it was his move, arbiter Gao Zhiqian didn't allow him. To the surprise of all four players, she pointed at his clock, as if to say 'first make a move'. After a while Aronian left the playing hall anyway. Later he would say, with a grin: 'I had to protest. You're not supposed to embarrass yourself instead of leaving the game.'

However, believe it or not, the arbiter was right to act like she did. Article 12.2 of the Laws of Chess says: *'The player having the move is not allowed to leave the playing area without permission of the arbiter.'* Still, *why* she didn't grant Aronian permission at first, remains the question.

Kramnik drew with black against Wang Hao and then reached a completely winning position against Aronian the next day.

PETER DOGGERS

The small incidents in Aronian-Shirov. First the Spanish GM thinks his opponent has lost on time. Next the arbiter stops Aronian from going to the bathroom.



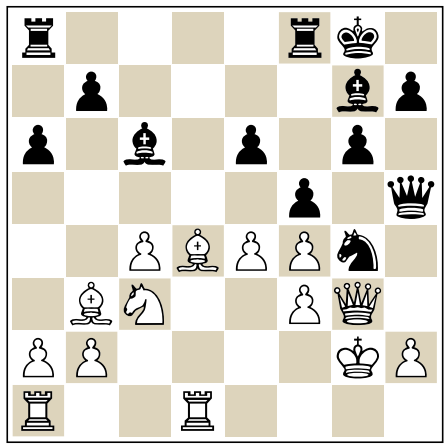
Kramnik-Aronian
position after 29...♘d7

In this overwhelming position for White, there should be more than one way to win.

30.♘b3? Immediately after the game Kramnik pointed out 30.♕f4! ♕e7 31.♘xd7 ♖xd7 32. b6!, and wins.

30...♖xc3 31.♕xc3 ♗a3! After this zwischenzug suddenly Black is not even worse any longer. Not 31...♗b4? in view of 32.♕c7. **32. ♖a1 ♗b4 33.♕b2 ♕f8 34.♘c1 ♗e7 35.♘b3 ♗b4 36.♘c1 ♗e7 37.♘b3 ♗b4 38.♘c1** Draw.

In the game Shirov-Wang Hao 'many things happened that cannot be explained', as the winner said afterwards.



Shirov-Wang Hao
position after 22.f3

Shirov has declined a speculative piece sacrifice and now has the advantage.

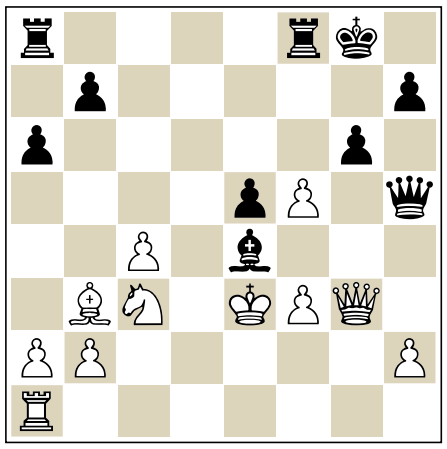
22...♗xd4?!

Relatively better was 22...♘f6 23. e5 ♘d7 24.♘d5!.

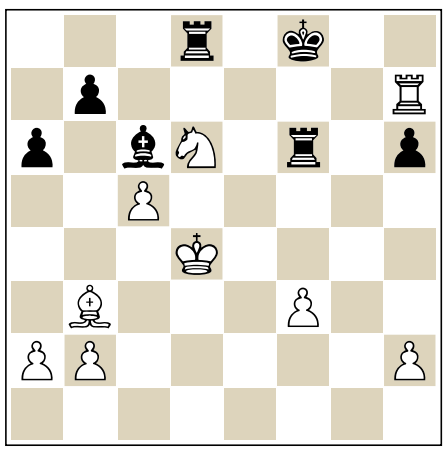
23.♖xd4?!

Highly surprising, until one hears

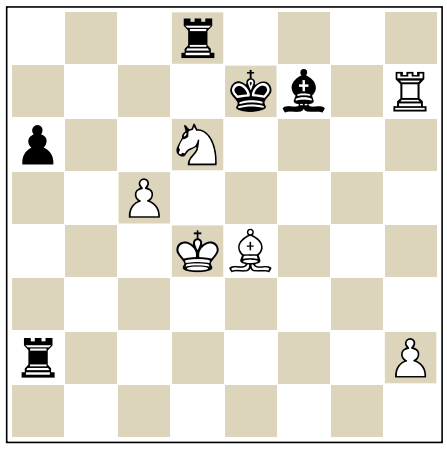
Shirov's explanation: 'I just committed this *lapsus manus*. I'm calculating variations and suddenly I see that my hand touches his bishop. This was of course an awful moment.'
23.fxg4! fxg4 24.♖xd4 e5 and now 25.c5+ (or 25.♖d2) should be close to winning for White.
23...♘e3+ 24.♔f2 fxe4! 25.♔xe3 e5! 26.♖xe4 ♗xe4 27.f5



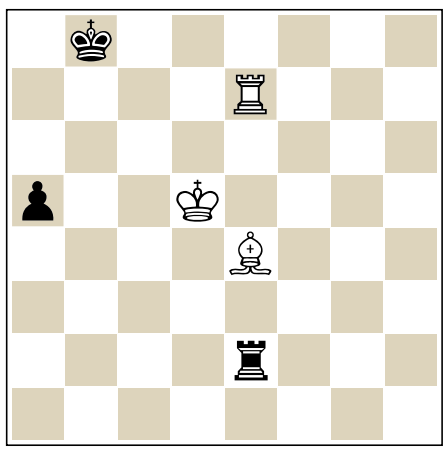
27...♗c6?
In one of the critical moments for the whole tournament, Wang Hao misses 27...♗xf5!, with the difference that after 28.c5+ ♔g7 29.♕xe5+ ♔h6 30.♕f4+ Black has 30...g5 and wins.
28.c5+ ♔g7 29.♕xe5+ ♔h6 30.♕f4+ ♕g5
Now Black has to enter an endgame that's not very clear, because 30...g5 31.♕d6+ ♔g7 32.♕e5+ ♔h6 33.♘e4 is too dangerous.
31.♕xg5+ ♔xg5 32.♘e4+! ♔xf5 33.♖g1! h6
33...♗xe4 34.fxe4+ ♔e5 35.♗d5 should be a draw.
34.♗c2 ♖ae8 35.♔d4 ♖d8+ 36.♘d6+ ♔e6 37.♖xg6+ ♖f6 38.♗b3+ ♔e7 39.♖g7+ ♔f8 40.♖h7



40...♖xf3?
Now Black gets into trouble. He should have defended with 40...♖d7!, but that's not easy to find, especially on move 40.
41.♗e6! b6 42.b4 bxc5+ 43.bxc5 ♗e8 44.♗d5 ♖f2 45.♖h8+ ♔e7 46.♖xh6 ♗f7 47.♗e4
Interesting was 47.♔e3!? ♗xd5 48.♔xf2 ♗xa2 49.h4.
47...♖xa2 48.♖h7



48...♖xd6+! 49.cxd6+ ♔xd6 50.♖xf7 ♖xh2
Wang Hao has defended well, liquidating to a drawn endgame. However, from this point on he doesn't go for one of the two standard ways to draw this endgame (to be found in all manuals without the a-pawn). Afterwards the Chinese GM said he was suffering from a headache and wanted to end the game as quickly as possible.
51.♖f6+ ♔e7 52.♔e5 a5 53.♖a6 ♖d2 54.♖h6 ♖f2 55.♖e6+ ♔d7 56.♖a6 ♔c7 57.♖c6+ ♔d7 58.♖b6 ♖d2 59.♖b7+ ♔c8 60.♖h7 ♖e2 61.♔d5 ♔b8 62.♖e7
Black has got himself into trouble, but theoretically it's still a draw.



62...a4? Now Black loses after all. (62...♖e3, 62...♖f2, 62...♖h2.)
63.♔c6 ♖f2 64.♖e8+ ♔a7 65.♔c5 Black resigned.

After three rounds the tournament reached its halfway point and said goodbye to the Expo. The second half took place in the famous Lu Bo Lang Club, next to the Yuyuan Garden. The tournament took up two stories of this relatively small but luxurious club. The playing room was on the third floor and the press room one floor higher, next to a beautiful dining room. Over the years many celebrities enjoyed a good meal at the round table there, including Queen Elizabeth II, Fidel Castro and U.S. President Bill Clinton. They all saw the view from the balcony, but not all of them saw it as stunning as it is today, with not only the Yuyuan Garden below, but also the many skyscrapers on the horizon.

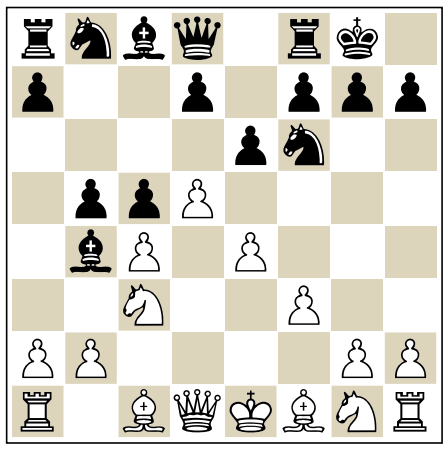
As if inspired by the new surroundings, Shirov played his best game of the tournament in Round 4.

NOTES BY
Jan Timman

NI 30.1 – E20
Alexey Shirov
Vladimir Kramnik
Shanghai 2010 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 c5 5.d5 b5
A sharp pawn sacrifice that is seen more often in the Nimzo-Indian, for example 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♗g5 h6 5.♗h4 c5 6.d5 b5.
6.e4 0-0
The most common continuation is 6...bxc4, but with the text Black prevents White from smoothly completing his development. A remarkable detail is that the ensu-

ing position can also be reached if Black transposes his fifth and sixth moves.



7.e5 White is aiming for a broad, advanced centre. Alternatives are 7.♗g5 en 7.♗d2.

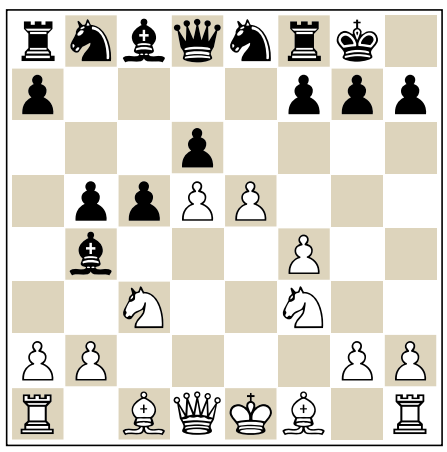
7...♘e8

Interesting is 7...exd5, but after 8.exf6 d4 9.a3 ♗a5 10.b4 dxc3 11.bxa5 ♕xf6 12.♕d5! Black has insufficient compensation for the piece.

8.f4 exd5

Probably the best way to create counterplay. Black is going to put pressure on the enemy centre. In Bluvshtein-Efimenko, Montreal 2005, White came out better after 8...d6 9.♘f3 bxc4 10.♗xc4 ♗a6 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.0-0.

9.cxd5 d6 10.♘f3



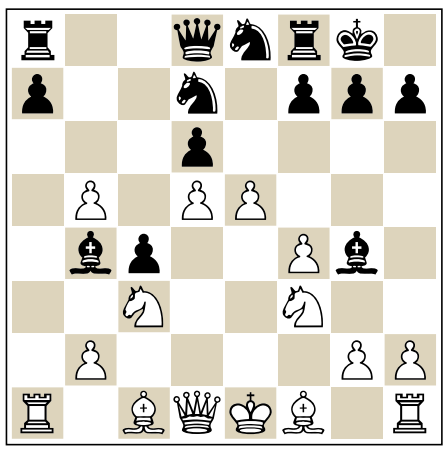
10...c4

Another sharp move, but probably not the best one. After 10...♘c7, intending to open fire on the d-pawn, Black would probably have been able to solve his opening problems.

11.a4!

Now White will get an advantage.

11...♗g4 12.axb5 ♘d7



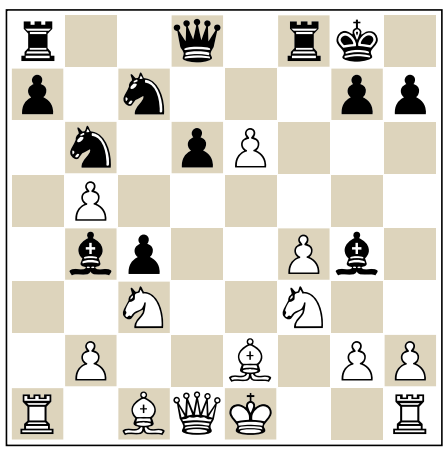
13.e6

For ChessBase, Shirov said that he had thought better of 13.♗xc4 in view of the surprising 13...♘xe5. But then, too, White can get a clear advantage with 14.fxe5 ♗xf3 15.gxf3! ♕h4+ 16.♔e2 ♕xc4+ 17.♕d3, and the endgame is definitely unpleasant for Black.

Kramnik had probably intended to continue with 13...dxe5. After 14.0-0 ♘d6 15.♗e2 ♗c5+ 16.♔h1 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♖e8 Black has positional compensation for the pawn.

With the text White returns the pawn, confident that he will be able to take the initiative.

13...fxe6 14.dxe6 ♘b6 15.♗e2 ♘c7



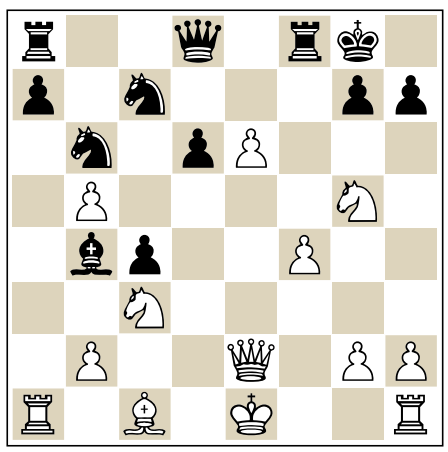
16.♘g5!

This knight sortie is stronger than 16.0-0, after which Black would get sufficient counterplay with 16...♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♘xb5.

16...♗xe2

Safer was 16...♗xe6, after which White remains better after 17.0-0.

17.♕xe2



17...d5?

Kramnik was justifiably annoyed about this move afterwards. He should have gone for elimination of the dangerous white e-pawn with 17...♕f6 or 17...♕e7. The computer reckons Black is fine then, but as Shirov shows, White would still be in the driving seat. Here follows a brief survey of the possibilities:

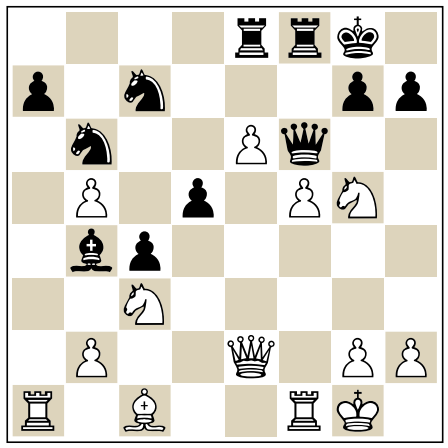
A) 17...♕f6 18.0-0 h6 19.♘ce4 ♕f5 20.g4 ♕xb5 21.e7! ♖fe8 22.f5! ♖xe7 23.f6, and Black will be overrun;

B) 17...♕e7. Black's best move. Now Shirov had planned 18.♕g4, intending to meet 18...h6 undauntedly with 19.f5!, and after 19...hxg5 20.♗xg5 ♕e8 21.0-0 White has a decisive attack. Better is 18...♘xb5. After 19.♗d2 ♘d4 20.0-0 ♘f5! Black has succeeded in stopping the march of the f-pawn. White is better after 21.♖fe1, but things are not completely clear.

18.0-0 ♕f6 19.f5

Now the mighty pawn duo is invulnerable.

19...♖ae8 A deep trap.



DAVID LLADA

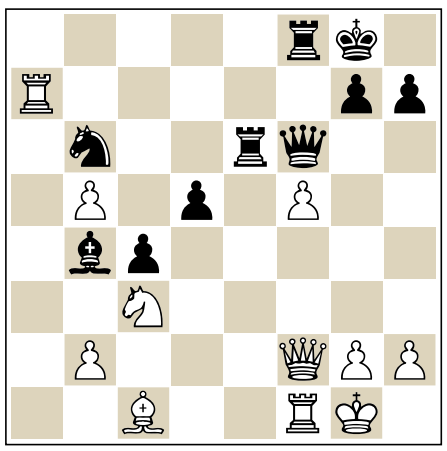
In Round 4 Alexey Shirov paved the way to tournament victory with a win over Vladimir Kramnik.

20.♖xa7 And White falls for it. Winning was 20.♗e3. After 20...♗xc3 21.bxc3 ♘xb5 White has a very strong reply in 22.♕g4!, and there is no good defence against the threat of 23.♘xh7.

20...♘xe6! This was the point of the previous move.

21.♘xe6 ♖xe6 22.♕f2

White cannot capture on e6, since after 22.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 23.fxe6 ♗c5+ he is suddenly mated.



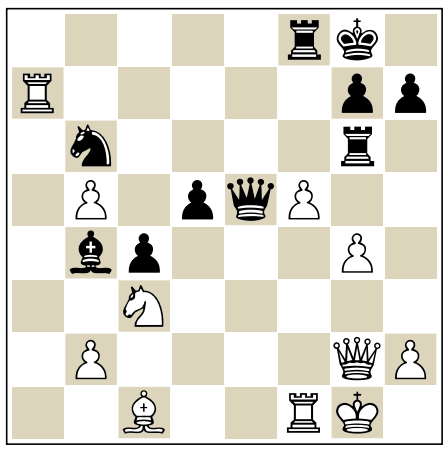
22...♕e5

Kramnik overplays his hand. He had undoubtedly seen that 22...♖e5 was satisfactory, but because of Shirov's time-trouble and in view of the tournament situation he starts playing for the win.

I do not, frankly speaking, understand what Kramnik had overlooked in playing this, because after the text there are two ways in which Shirov can bend the game to his will.

After 22...♖e5 23.♗e3 ♖xe3! 24.♕xe3 d4 25.♕e6+ ♕xe6 26.fxe6 dxc3 27.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 28.bxc3 ♗xc3 the game would certainly have ended in a draw.

23.g4 Simple and strong. **23...♖g6 24.♕g2** Again the strongest move, but even after 24.♕f4 Black would have remained a pawn down without compensation.



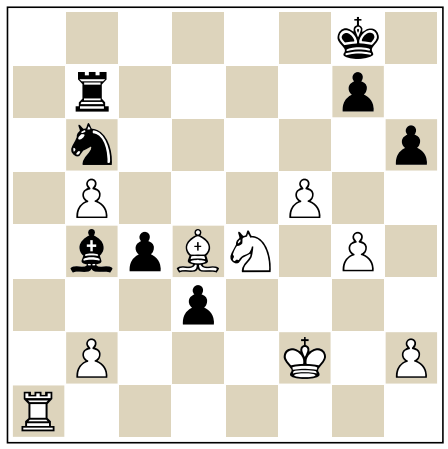
24...♖gf6

This was not the idea behind the previous moves, of course, but after 24...♕d4+ 25.♔h1 ♖xg4 26.♗e3! ♕d3 27.♕xg4 ♕xf1+ 28.♗g1 Black would have been finished.

25.♗f4 ♕d4+ 26.♕f2

Forcing a queen swap. White remains a very healthy pawn up.

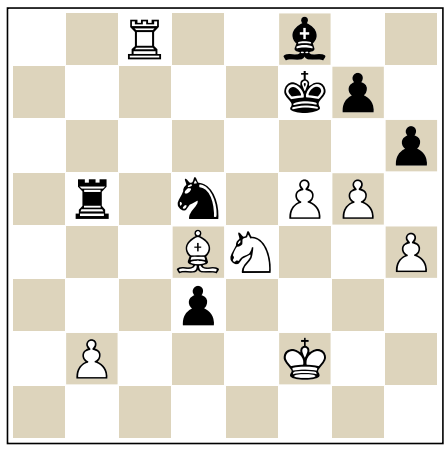
26...♕xf2+ 27.♔xf2 d4 28.♘e4 ♖6f7 29.♖xf7 ♖xf7 30.♖a1 h6 31.♗e5 d3 32.♗d4 ♖b7



33.h4

Meanwhile, both players were in time-trouble. Stronger was 33.♔f3! in order to have optimal coordination between the white forces. After the text Black gets drawing chances.

33...♗f8 34.♖c1 ♘d5 35.♖xc4 ♖xb5 36.♖c8 ♔f7 37.g5



37...♘e7??

It was obviously not Kramnik's day. With the text he blunders a piece. After 37...d2 38.♔e2 ♘f4+ 39.♔xd2 ♖xf5 the white win would have remained doubtful.

38.♘d6+ Black resigns.

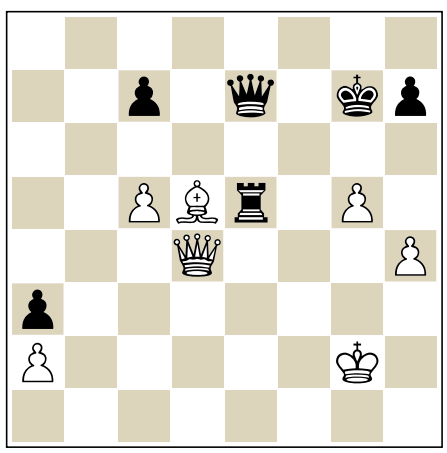
With two rounds to go the Spaniard was now leading with 8 points, followed by Aronian with 6, Kramnik with 3 and Wang Hao with 2.

Shanghai 2010 — **cat. XXI**

				1	2	3	4		TPR
1	Alexey Shirov	IGM	ESP	2749	* *	½ 1	½ ½	1 1	12	2959
2	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2790	½ 0	* *	½ 1	½ ½	7	2766
3	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2783	½ ½	½ 0	* *	1 ½	7	2770
4	Wang Hao	IGM	CHN	2724	0 0	½ ½	0 ½	* *	3	2581

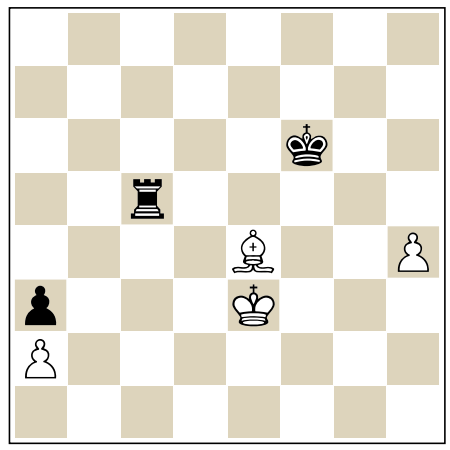
3 points per win, 1 for a draw

This meant that to keep chances for qualifying for Bilbao, Kramnik had to beat Aronian in Round 5... with black! For 24 moves the two followed a game Khairullin-Alekseev that had been played a week before: a line of the Open Catalan in which White sacrifices an exchange for good compensation. However, somehow Aronian didn't get enough compensation and ended up with a lost position instead. It was only because Kramnik missed a direct win at move 39 that the game lasted much longer.

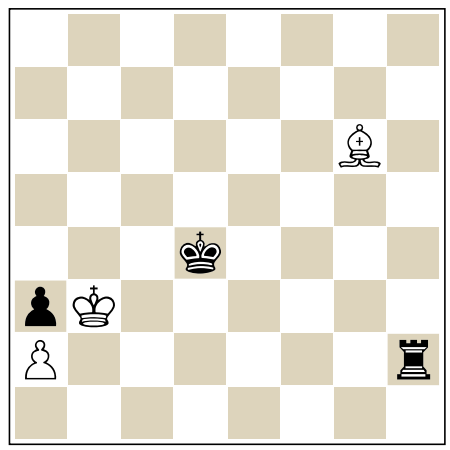


Aronian-Kramnik
position after 39.♗d5

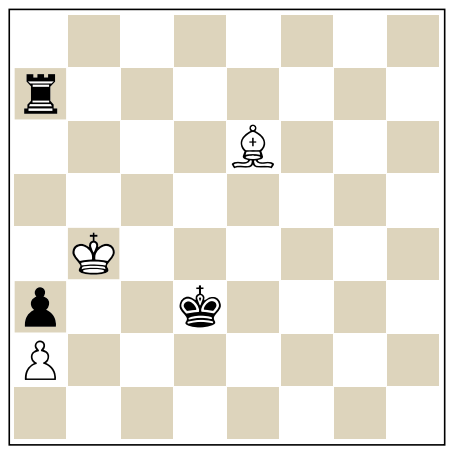
39...c6?
39...h6 40.gxh6+ ♔xh6 41.c6 ♖e2+ 42.♔f3 ♕e5, and White cannot avoid the queen swap, after which the same endgame arises as in the game, but with the c-pawns still on the board, which makes the win much easier.
40.♔g3! h6 41.gxh6+ ♔xh6 42.♕f4+ ♔h7 43.♗xc6 ♖xc5 44.♕e4+
44.♗e4+ ♔g7 45.♕g4+ ♔h8.
44...♕xe4 45.♗xe4+ ♔g7 46.♔f4 ♔f6 47.♔e3



47...♔e5
After the game both players thought the endgame to be drawn, but in fact it's a win according to the tablebase, albeit not an easy one. 47...♖h5 48.♗c2 ♖xh4 is 'mate in 54'.
48.♔d3 ♖b5 49.♔c4
After 49.♗g6? Black has the trick 49...♖b3+! 50.♔c2 ♖b2+, as Kramnik pointed out.
49...♖b2 50.♗h7 ♖h2
Not 50...♖xa2?? 51.♔b3 ♖a1 52. h5, with a draw.
51.h5 ♖xh5
From here it's 'mate in 53'.
52.♗c2 ♖h2 53.♔b3 ♔d4 54. ♗g6



54...♖h4?
Because White can now take on a3, many chess fans and journalists had serious doubts that this was the move played instead of 54...♖h3+. In some online reports the text-move was duly changed into the rook check! However, the next morning the players confirmed and explained. Kramnik: 'I thought I was winning after 55.♔xa3 ♔c3, which is true when his bishop is on my side of the board, but he can put it onto his side.' Aronian: 'I thought I had a fortress anyway.'
55.♔b4?
55.♔xa3! ♔c3, and now only two moves draw: 56.♗b1! and 56.♗e4!.
55...♖h6 56.♗f7 ♖a6 57.♗g8
More tenacious was 57.♔b3.
57...♖a7 58.♗e6 ♔d3



Kramnik finds the winning plan, which is to go round with the king, then push the white king away as far as possible before taking on a2.
59.♗b3 ♔d2 60.♗g8 ♔c2 61.♔c4 ♔c1 62.♔c3 ♔b1 63. ♗b3 ♖c7+ 64.♔d3 ♔b2 65.♔d2 ♖d7+ 66.♔e3 ♔c3 67.♗g8 ♖e7+ 68.♔f2 ♔d2 69.♔f3 ♔d3 70.♔f2 ♖e2+ 71.♔f3 ♖e8
And White resigned, as his king will be cut off along the f-file, after which Black collects the a-pawn.

In his second game against Wang Hao, Shirov came under heavy pressure again, but again the Chinese player faltered. In a highly promising position he liquidated to an ending that promised nothing more than a draw. However, ambitious for more the young

PETER DOGGERS

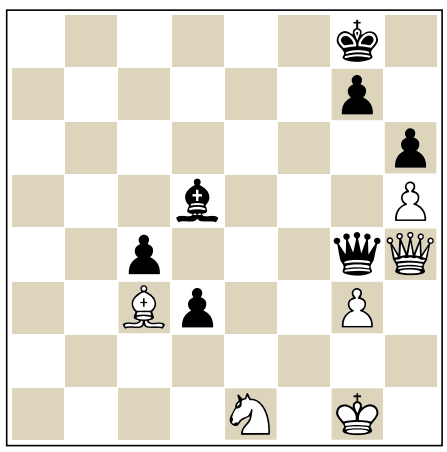
The Armageddon game between Levon Aronian and Vladimir Kramnik finished chaotically. 'What is this, to play this position?'

Chinese spurned several perpetuals, kept playing for a win and ultimately lost.

And so Shirov had won the tournament and qualified for Bilbao with a round to spare. But because Aronian and Kramnik now shared second and third places, the second qualifier wasn't decided on until the very end. Following two rather uneventful draws in the last round, the tournament was gearing up for a thrilling finale. According to the regulations, a blitz play-off would decide which of the two players would join Anand, Carlsen and Shirov in Bilbao. It consisted of two games of four minutes with three-second increments, and if necessary an Armageddon with five minutes for White who needs a win, against four for Black (no increments) who needs a draw.

The first blitz game was won pretty convincingly by Kramnik, who had white in an Exchange Slav. In the second game he was also better, and when both players had about 10 seconds left on the clock (plus those 3 seconds per move), the Russian had a perpetual but took too much time for one of his checks and lost on time.

Kramnik then won the toss and chose the black pieces for the Armageddon. On move 35 he sacrificed a piece and got good compensation, but no more. At some point it looked as if Aronian was winning, but it was never clear.

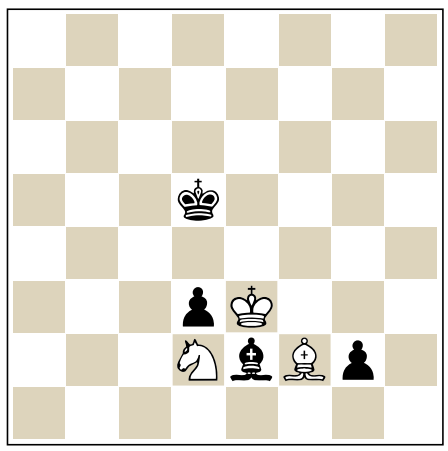


Aronian-Kramnik
position after 64.♕h4

Aronian has just offered a queen swap, which allows Kramnik to get rid of all kingside pawns. Under normal circumstances the game would be drawn at once, but because Aronian needed a win, he played on a bit longer.

64...♕xh4 65.gxh4 ♗f7 66.♔f2 ♗xh5 67.♔e3 g5 68.hxg5 hxg5 69.♔d4 ♗e2 70.♗d2 g4 71.♔e3 ♔f7 72.♔f4 ♔e6 73.♗c3 ♔d5 74.♘g2 ♔c5 75.♘e3 ♔b5 76.♔e5 ♔a4 Now both players had 11 seconds left (no increments!). **77.♔d4 ♔b3 78.♗e1 g3 79.♘g2 ♔c2 80.♘e3+ ♔b3**

Here Kramnik accidentally tipped over his king and pressed the clock before raising it again. **81.♘xc4 g2 82.♗f2 ♔c2 83.♔e3 ♔b3 84.♘d2+ ♔c3** Again Black's king fell over. Aronian complained audibly: 'What are you doing?' **85.♘e4+ ♔c4 86.♘d2+ ♔d5**



Here Aronian's flag fell. Kramnik responded: 'What is this, to play this position?' It was the heat of the moment. Soon afterwards the players were on friendly terms again.

After the tournament had finished Kramnik admitted that it had been difficult for him. 'I should probably have been a bit more professional and come here in advance, because I was still suffering a bit from jet lag during the event, and it's a different climate. Besides, we didn't have a rest day, which is also quite tough. I wasn't in the best of shapes; I was playing shakily. Although I qualified for Bilbao, I'm not satisfied with my performance here.'

Shirov said: 'You cannot feel you deserve to score so many points with the positions I had, but of course I can only be satisfied with the result. As to the quality of play, I hope the next tournament will be better. I like to play in capital cities. Somehow my best results are connected with capital cities, or with big cities, I mean, Sofia and now Shanghai...' To the question whether Bilbao is big enough for him, he answered smilingly: 'Well, it is the biggest in the Basque country...'

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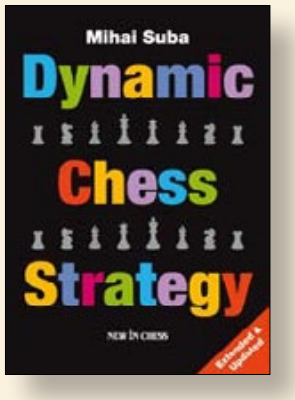

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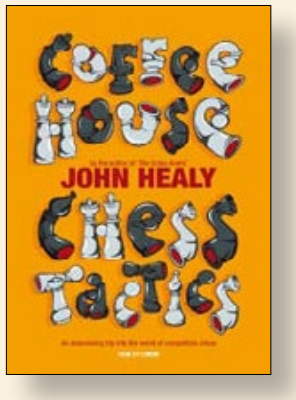

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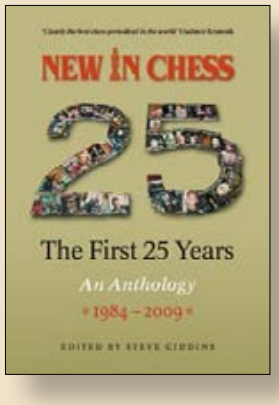

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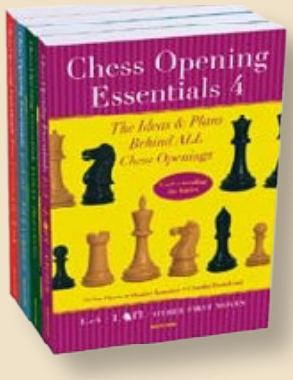

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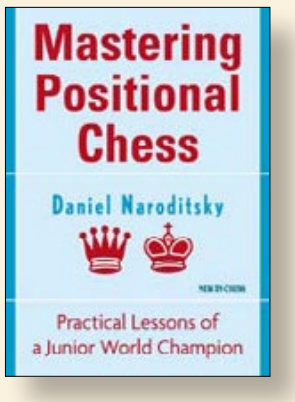

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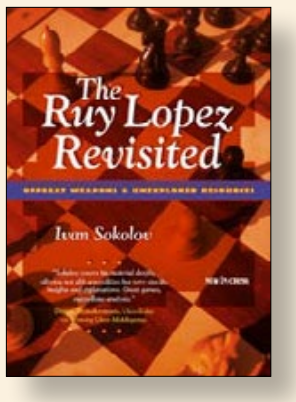

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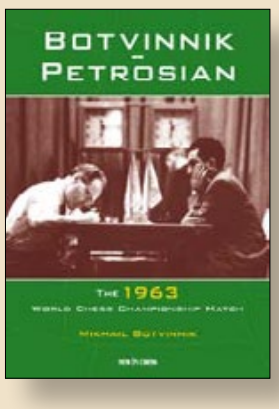

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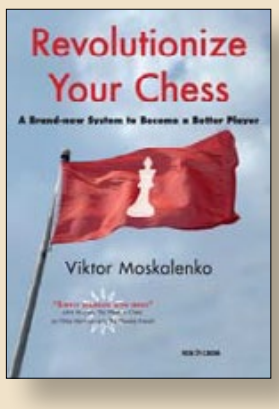

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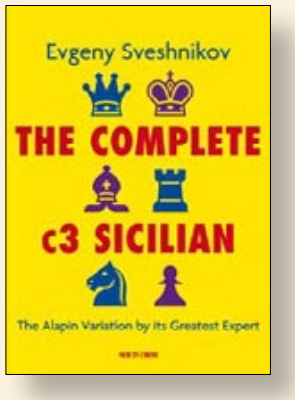

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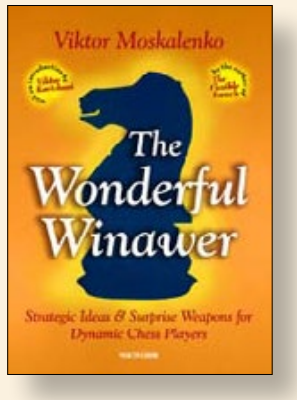

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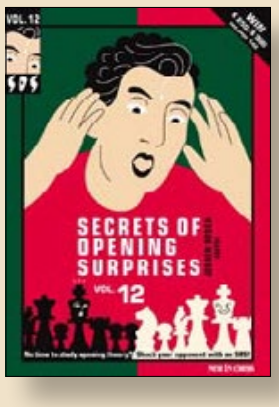

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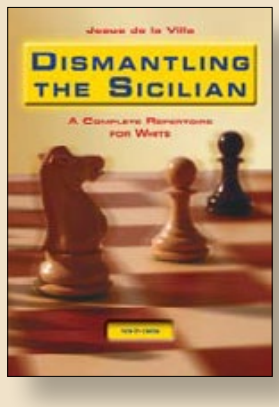

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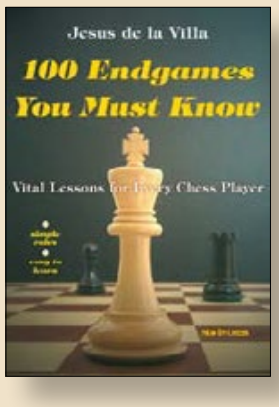

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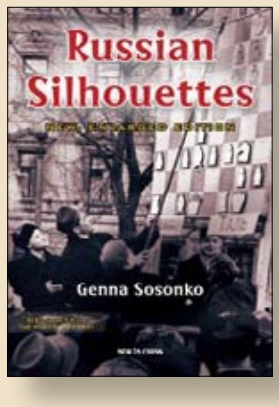

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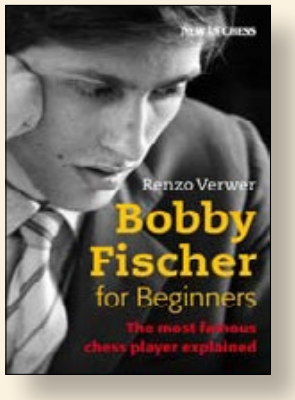

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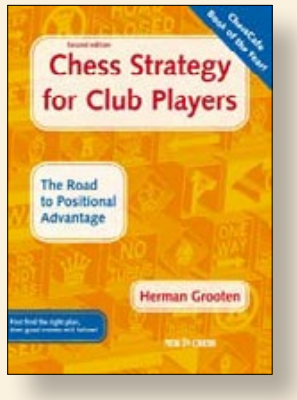

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Trying to make chess relevant to the world at large

Maurice Ashley

...Now you're in New York
Concrete jungle where dreams are made of...
Empire State of Mind *by Jay-Z and Alicia Keys*

You're in the penthouse suite of a chic New York City hotel. Though it's barely past noon, a crowd of fashionably dressed party goers are sipping champagne and munching on a perpetual stream of tasty hors d'oeuvres. Despite unusually brisk gusts of wind, many of the attendees happily gather on the balcony to take in the sights and sounds of downtown Gotham. A gaggle of media are also in attendance – from the hip MTV to the sporty ESPN to the venerable New York Times – and they snap to attention as actress and model Liv Tyler steps off the elevator to make her grand entrance. The rapid-fire clicks of cameras with gargantuan lenses capture the moment as the paparazzi dangerously jockey for position. After several minutes of 'step and repeat' – as the act of posing for multiple photos is called – the Hollywood starlet makes her way over to a makeshift announcer's booth to be interviewed about her opinion on... chess?!

If acceptance into pop culture is the precursor to the success of any sport, then the event that took place on September 10th at the Cooper Square Hotel, in the media capital of the world, may just have been the latest and most interesting leap chess has ever taken to potentially becoming a mainstream activity. Billed as the Raw World Chess Challenge, the game featured the world's highest rated player, Norwegian wunderkind Magnus Carlsen, taking on the World in an unusually structured

match, a 21st century twist on this ancient pastime. While Magnus, the picture of determined concentration, played on a physical chess board, his moves were relayed online to three GMs – Judit Polgar of Hungary, the top female player in history; Hikaru Nakamura, the highest rated player in the U.S.; and French number one, 19-year-old Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. Unable to consult with each other, the trio of accomplished champions were given a minute to suggest responses that were then voted on by the 'World', which turned out to be over 40,000 people online.

Magnus Carlsen on the side of a New York City bus. 'Suddenly our modest chess star was giving David Beckham a run for his money.'

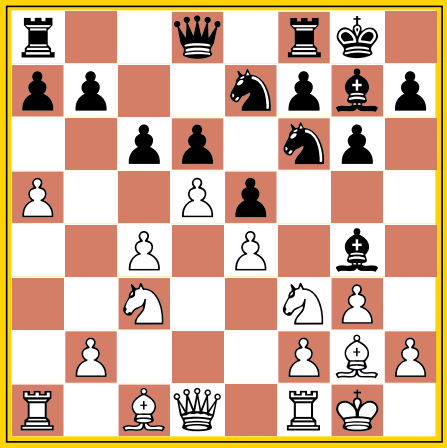
The fans' most popular choice was then played on Magnus' board, and he in turn had a scant minute to devise his response. It was Magnus against the Mob, as the World tried to prove that the young genius was no match for the collective effort of thousands.

Providing commentary for the show was yours truly and one Garry Kasparov, who took time out of his world-wide managerial campaign on behalf of FIDE presidential hopeful Anatoly Karpov to be an 'ambassador' for the event. It was a bit strange for me to be sitting next to Garry as a colleague, since for almost ten years I had the pleasure of announcing some of his biggest matches: the Intel Grand Prix series, his World Championship match in 1995 against current champion Viswanathan Anand, and his gut-wrenching matches against various silicon combatants. Garry's first words as he sat next to me were, 'This is probably the highest rated commentary team in history.' I smiled, and thought I shouldn't say anything to burst his bubble, since my rating undoubtedly dragged our competitive average down dramatically. But once we got going, the issue of our place in commentary history took on its true importance. It seems we both intuitively understood that despite the non-professional nature of the contest, this was indeed an historic moment in chess.

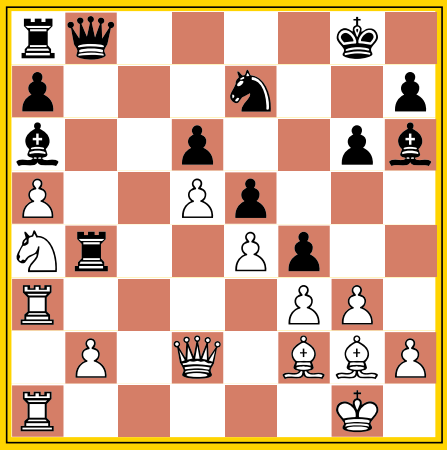
Now while a lot of fans would undoubtedly see the constellation of chess stars as worthy of all the media coverage, the reality was that the world press was there for only one reason: Magnus and his alliance to the hosts of the event (they don't like the word 'sponsors'). I had never heard of G-Star until I was asked to do the event months

KI 72.6 – E62
Magnus Carlsen
The World
New York 2010
Raw Chess Challenge

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.♘c3 ♘c6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 ♘e7 9.e4 c6 10.a4 ♗g4 11.a5



11...cxd5 12.cxd5 ♕d7 13.♗e3 ♖fc8 14.♕a4 ♘e8 15.♘d2 ♕d8 16.♕b4 ♘c7 17.♘c4 ♘a6 18.♕xb7 ♖xc4 19.♕xa6 ♖b4 20.f3 ♗c8 21.♕e2 f5 22.♕d2 ♗a6 23.♖fc1 ♕b8 24.♘a4 ♖b3 25.♖c3 ♖b4 26.♖ca3 f4 27.♗f2 ♗h6



28.♘b6 fxg3 29.♕xb4 gxf2+ 30.♔xf2 ♗c8 31.♖b3 axb6 32.♕xb6 ♕a7 33.a6 ♔f7 34.♕xa7 ♖xa7 35.♖b6 ♔e8 36.♖xd6 ♗f8 37.♖b6 ♘xd5 38.♖b8 ♗c5+ 39.♔g3 ♘e7 40.♗h3 ♔d8 41.♗xc8 ♘xc8 42.♖c1 ♖c7 43.♖xc5 ♖xc5 44.a7
Black resigned.

NEW IN CHESS

Not bad for a chess player. Magnus Carlsen holds the winner's trophy standing between Hollywood starlet Liv Tylor and Garry Kasparov.

before, upon which I was promptly informed by my more fashion-conscious niece that they are one of the more trendy high-end denim companies in the world. As I traded emails with Magnus' manager, Espen Agdestein, and a G-Star representative, I was told to keep news of the upcoming event tightly under wraps. They were planning to make a big announcement in Berlin, and they didn't want the news to leak too soon.

It was right then that it began to dawn on me how important the event might be to chess itself. Here was a clothing company backing a chess player. Not only that, but they had a major Hollywood actress who also represented the line, and the chess event was to coincide with Fashion Week in New York City. When the story and requisite photos were finally released, Magnus went from chess hero to fashion model in one fell swoop, looking all the world like a rugged bad boy with his bearded visage and aggressive scowl. Just a couple of days before the event, a friend of mine called me to say he had just seen that same Magnus image on the side of a New York City bus. Suddenly, our modest chess star was giving David Beckham a run for his money.

This unusual blend of cutting edge fashion and intellectual prowess made for a combination that could only be called sexy. While it seems there has been some controversy over the recent chess sites that have tried to play up the sex appeal of various female players, here was an event that clearly intimated sex appeal, down to a slightly controversial older starlet standing next to a teen not yet allowed to drink (in the States anyway). When asked about a moment in the photo shoot when Ms. Tyler was innocently resting on his leg, Magnus replied with that understated smile of his, 'It was nice.' Even the rest of us were obligated to look good for the cameras by dressing in G-Star gear, and given a touch of make-up by one of their beauticians. I got the feeling that a chess game had broken out at a fashion show. OK, I tend to exaggerate (which is why they hire me), but not by much. It's rare to see a chess event where how the participants look matters as much as the game itself.

In the end, the game did not live up to the billing. At first, the World's choice of a King's Indian seemed brave, as the two male GMs overran Judit's choice of a Nimzo-Indian. When Magnus decided to go super-solid with the

NEW IN CHESS

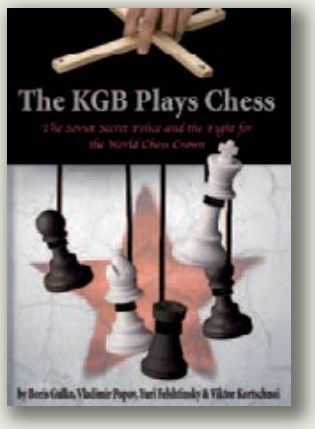
A formidable commentary team. Garry Kasparov and Maurice Ashley kept the online audience entertained from the top-floor of the Cooper Square Hotel.

g3-system, Kasparov was already lamenting the World's choice. 'This position will not suit the tactical inclinations of the World players', he remarked, and by move 10, it was clear that trouble was brewing. Three against one started to look like a disaster, as the Grandmasters routinely found themselves having to support moves they themselves didn't prefer. As Polgar said afterwards, 'It was like having too many chefs in the kitchen.' When the World captured on d5, Kasparov suddenly went from doubtful to morose. While I'm the type of guy who thinks I could come up with a million reasons to make ice melting seem exciting (global warming, refrigerator's broken, no more cold beer!), Kasparov's standards for a game worth watching tend to be a lot higher. Move after move he seemed to retreat into himself, almost as if he were the one going through the pain of losing the game. When I referenced his book *How Life Imitates Chess* and asked him what he would advise a corporation teetering on the brink, he saw through my vain attempt to interest him and replied, 'Sometimes there's nothing to do.'

With a bad game on tap and operating on only a couple of hours sleep due to his busy campaigning, Kasparov leaned back and started commentating less and less. In desperation, I tried a different tack: I come from Brooklyn, I told him, and in the parks where I grew up getting hustled, we never give up. When he replied that street chess is different from professional chess, I feigned insult. 'Hey, Brooklyn's the home of Gata Kamsky, and was also the home of a guy named Bobby Fischer.'

That surprised him a little, and I could see in his face that he was thinking, 'Maurice, why are you trying to defend this mess?' But it slowly got him going, and pretty soon we were betting to see how long the game would last (hey, anything to keep the fans entertained!). He was back, energetic as ever, talking about chess politics and the future of the game, even chanting over and over for the world to resign. Fortunately for me, Magnus wanted to finish with a flourish (28.♘b6) instead of total but boring domination (28.g4), and the game went on a bit longer than it probably should have. Even the trio of GMs allowed me to win our third bet when they obligingly allowed Magnus to play the simple but pretty sacrifice 43.♖xc5. We all knew what this was: a fun show for the fans, the media and the hosts.

The post-game conference with Magnus holding the winner's trophy with a beaming Liv smiling next to him was picture perfect. They would sit next to each other just a few days later at G-Star's moment in the sun during Fashion Week, showcasing next year's line. Even in this foreign environment, Magnus didn't have to force himself in front of the cameras. They magically found him. As the heir to Fischer and Kasparov, this bright star with the boyish grin seemed comfortable with his potential to make chess relevant to the world at large. One can only hope that chess itself is truly ready for its chance to shine as well.



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Hou Yifan grabs lead in Women Grand Prix

The winner of the FIDE Women Grand Prix will gain the right to challenge the winner of the 2010 Women's World Championship, to be held later this year in Turkey, to a match for the highest title. The fifth stage of the GP took the cream of the ladies to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where a neck-and-neck race developed between Hou Yifan and Antoaneta Stefanova. Pitted against her direct rival in the last round, the 16-year-old Chinese prevailed and not only won the tournament, but also moved into first place in the overall standings with one event to go. A report by **Dejan Bojkov**, the trainer of Antoaneta Stefanova (known to him and her friends as 'Ety').

I have been working with Ety since October 2009. Part of my contract obligations concerned the tournaments of the Women Grand Prix series. These tournaments were created only a couple of years ago in an attempt to lift the image of the women chess all over the world. Initially they were intended to be rapid events, but later they grew into something more substantial. The stakes in this circuit are high. The overall winner receives the right to play a match against the World Champion, who will be determined at the end of this year at the World Championship in Turkey. For this reason almost all the best women players take part, and as for the strength of the players, these tournaments can be compared to the male super round-robins in Linares or Wijk aan Zee. This is a phenomenon that has not been seen lately in women's chess. It is no secret that most of the ladies usually compete in opens, the most attractive one for them being the one in Gibraltar. The GibTelecom Open brings together the cream of the female elite thanks to an attractive prize-fund and the opportunity to win prices in both the men's and the women's sections.

The Grand Prix series consist of six tournaments: Istanbul (Turkey), Nanjing (China), Nalchik (Russia), Jermuk (Armenia), Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) and Santiago (Chile). Each player can compete in a maximum of four of them. The best three results are counted for the overall standings. Each host country has the right to have a participant in the series.

When we are speaking about the women's world championship system there is never any clarity. Recently, the Russian chess federation came up with a new proposal to include two more players in the fight for the title: the current World Champion, Alexandra Kosteniuk, and the top-rated female player.

But let's return to the Grand Prix. In my personal opinion the Mongolian GP was the strongest of them all. Four former World Champions took part, as well as the top-three rated players (obviously excluding Judit Polgar).

This further expansion of the popularity of chess is most welcome. Mongolia is a relatively new destination on the chess map, although as a former Communist country largely influenced by the USSR our sport is very popular

Fully concentrated Hou Yifan is on her way to tournament victory and first place in the overall Grand Prix standings.

there. During the tournament, we lived in the closed area called Ikh Tenger, which is the President's complex.

We arrived a couple of days before the start of the event and had some time to visit the local attractions, such as the Gandantegchenling Monastery and the Migjed Janraisig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the symbols of the Mongolians, the bell tents (called yurts) in some of which there are still people living. That was all the fun, as during the tournament I lived like a hermit and worked in the hotel. The first free day could have meant a change, as there were meetings with the sponsors scheduled, but the doorknob of my room decided to take a day off, and I was left locked inside for a few hours. The previous day I had asked Ety if she would like to go to these meetings or whether she would rather stay and have a rest, to which she replied: 'We are all complaining about the lack of sponsors, but when the time comes to show a single sign of respect everyone tries to cover themselves. I have my obligations to these people, and I need to go.' However, when on the second free day the organizers presented a long entertainment programme with museums, horse-riding and arching, she preferred to skip the attractions and have some rest for the decisive rounds.

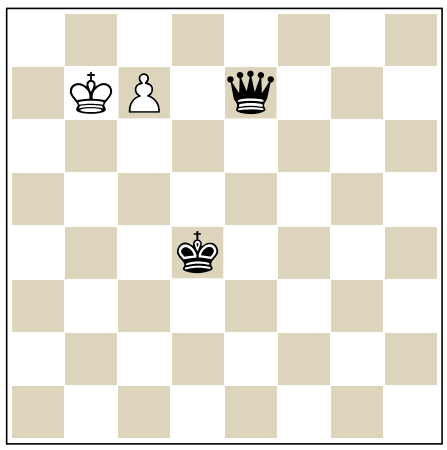
On the day of the opening ceremony a new Chess Academy was opened by Kirsan Ilyumzhinov himself. The FIDE President had a very busy schedule due to his election campaign but nevertheless found time to open the tournament, as he had also done in Jermuk. In the centre of the town, in front of the monument of Mongolia's most famous personality, Dzjengis Khan, the ladies picked their numbers in alphabetical order. Curiously enough, those who started first picked the lower numbers, thus securing more white games for themselves.

The tournament was played with the Sofia rules, not allowing the participants to agree short draws. In this company this was hardly required, as they all are proven fighters that like to play till the end. The chief judge of the draw offers was the legendary Nana Alexandria from Georgia. Interestingly, her opponent in the 1981 World Championship, Maya Chiburdanidze, participated in the competition.

The initial rounds define the roles of the players in a tournament – who will be the underdog and who will compete for the top places. Ety started with two draws. The second one was especially unpleasant, as she spoiled a huge advantage against Chiburdanidze

in time-trouble. In the next eight rounds, though, she would take no prisoners, scoring six wins against two losses.

As the tournament equator was being reached, the table was topped by China's Zhao Xue, although her wins had not been very impressive. One could find many twists in her games, and decisive changes in the evaluation of the positions. Her game against Zhu Chen was especially significant in that sense. First White was completely winning, but following a huge blunder it was Black who was winning. Finally the game reached the diagrammed position:



Zhu Chen-Zhao Xue
position after 63...♕e7

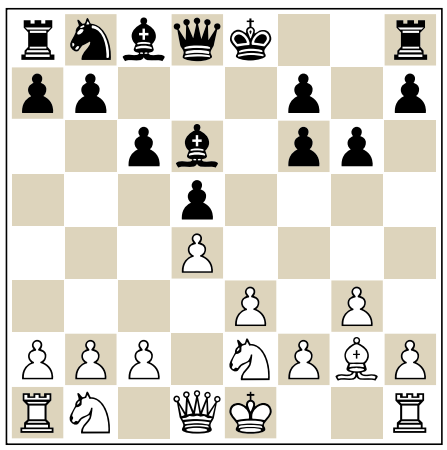
Without spending more than a second on her next move the former Women Champion played: **64.♔b8??** Instead, the accurate 64.♔a8! would have saved the day: 64...♕e8+ 65.♔b7 ♕e4+ 66.♔b8 ♕b1+ 67.♔a7 ♕a2+ 68.♔b8 ♕h2 69.♔a8. She resigned after: **64...♔c5 65.♔a8 ♕d7 66.♔b8 ♔b6**.

The logic of the event was telling us that Zhao was not going to keep the lead. And indeed, in the very next round she was technically outplayed by Tatiana Kosintseva. The Russian player had no other alternative in this tournament but first place, as due to engagements with her Russian club for the 2009 European Club Cup in Ohrid, she could play only three Grand Prix tournaments. Tatiana was playing in her usual solid manner, but in the next round she was stopped by Ety.

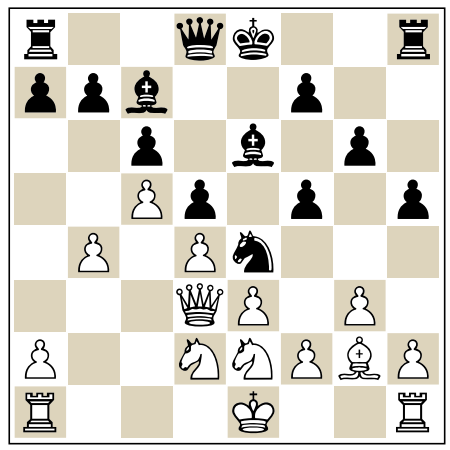
For a night owl like Antoaneta Stefanova it was pretty tough that the last round, when she was still fighting for first place, started at 10 a.m.

QP 7.5 – D00
Antoaneta Stefanova
Tatiana Kosintseva
Ulaanbaatar 2010 (5)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5
Time for a change. In their previous encounter just a month ago in Jermuk, the players had tested the main lines of the Ragozin. However, Tatiana is definitely well prepared against the Trompy, too.
2...d5 3.e3 g6 4.♗xf6 exf6 5.♘e2 ♗d6 6.g3 c6 7.♗g2



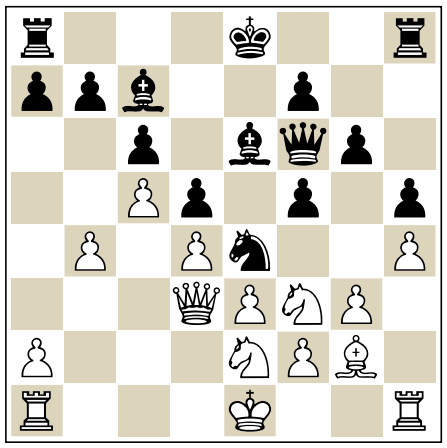
7...f5!
A good idea. Black was less precise in the following game: 7...♘d7 8.b3 f5 9.c4 ♘f6 10.♘bc3 ♗e6 11.c5, and White achieved harmony in his development and an initiative on the queen's flank: 11...♗c7 12.b4 a6 13.a4 0-0 14.0-0 g5 15.b5 ♕d7 16.♕d3 ♔g7 17.f4!, Laznicka-Mamedov, Benasque 2009, with a pleasant advantage for White, who later won.
8.b3 ♗e6 Now Black forces her opponent to lose some time before advancing the c-pawn.
9.♕d3 ♘d7 10.♘d2 ♘f6 11.c4 ♘e4 12.c5 ♗c7 13.b4 h5



Both players are postponing kingside castling. Once Ety did it pre-

maturely against Sasikiran (even though she knew it is wrong) and was severely punished.

14.♘f3 ♕f6 15.h4



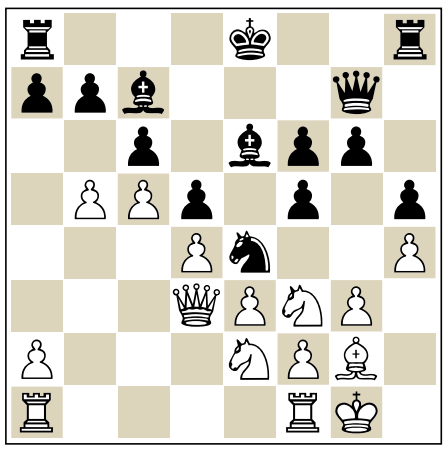
15...♕g7

The trick 15...a5 16.b5 (16.0-0 axb4 17.♖fb1 ♗a5 18.a3 is also good for White) 16...♘xc5 does not really work, as the c6 pawn is hanging: 17.♕c2 ♘e4 18.bxc6 b6 19.0-0 0-0 20.♖ab1, with a white advantage.

16.0-0

Now that ...h5-h4 has been stopped, White can finally castle. Still she has to hurry with her play on the queenside.

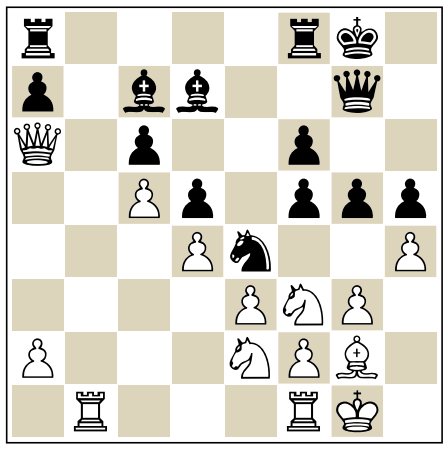
16...f6 17.b5



17...g5

Kosintseva follows her plan. However, a little prophylaxis might be better here: 17...♗c8 18.♖ab1 0-0 19.♖b2 (19.♘f4 does not prevent ...g6-g5, as the knight might be trapped after 19...g5 20.♘xh5? ♕f7) 19...g5, with sharp play in which both sides have their share of the chances.

18.bxc6 bxc6 19.♕a6 ♗d7 20.♖ab1 0-0

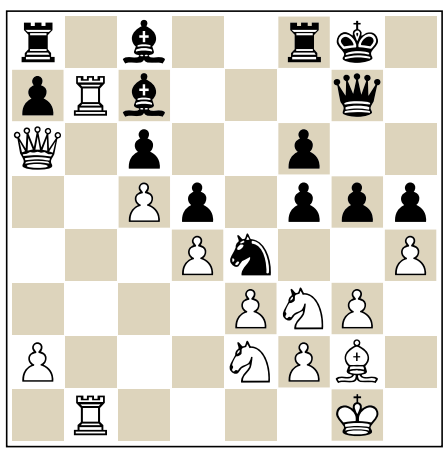


21.♖b7! A nice positional sacrifice. Ety will gain control of the light squares thanks to the exchange she has invested.

21...♗c8 22.♖fb1

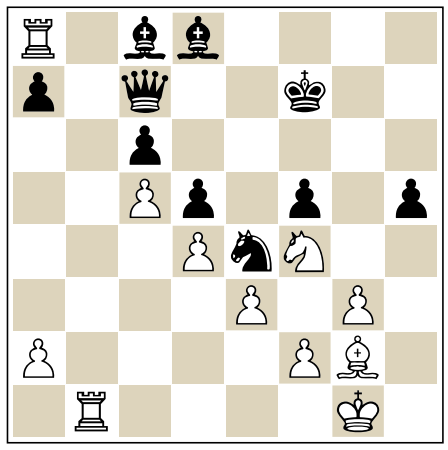
Worse is 22.hxg5 ♖b8 23.♖fb1 ♕d7 24.gxf6 ♗d8!.

Objectively best seems to be 22.♕xc6 ♗xb7 23.♕xb7 ♖fd8 24.hxg5 fxg5 25.♕c6, with full compensation for the exchange.



22...♗xb7

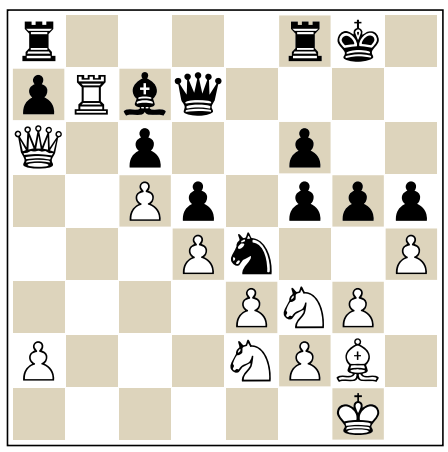
There is nothing wrong with this move, but White's task would be much more complicated after 22...♕d7!, with the idea of swapping both white rooks. Play might continue 23.hxg5 (23.♖xc7?! ♕xc7 24.♕a3 ♖b8 favours Black) 23...♖b8, and now the highly entertaining sacrifice 24.gxf6! (in the line 24.♕xa7?! ♗xb7 25.♖xb7 ♖xb7 26.♕xb7 ♖b8 27.♕a7 – 27.♕a6 fxg5 – 27...♖b1+ 28.♗f1 ♘xg5 29.♘h4 White seems in control, but there is a tactical stroke: 29...♘h3+ 30.♔g2 ♘xf2!) 24...♗d8 25.♖xb8 ♗xa6 26.♘e5 ♕c7 27.♘f4! ♗c8 28.f7+ ♖xf7 29.♘xf7 ♔xf7 30.♖a8.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and it is difficult to judge who is better, but obviously White should have at least enough for her sacrificed piece.

23.♖xb7 ♕d7

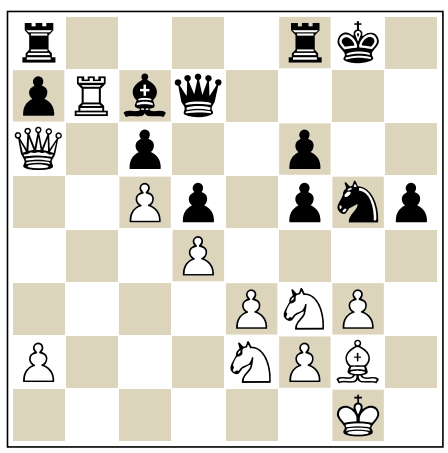


24.hxg5!

Ety looks for juicy squares for her knights.

24...♘xg5

The only move, as Black's position would crumble after 24...fxg5 25.♘e5 ♕g7 26.♕xc6.



25.♘h4

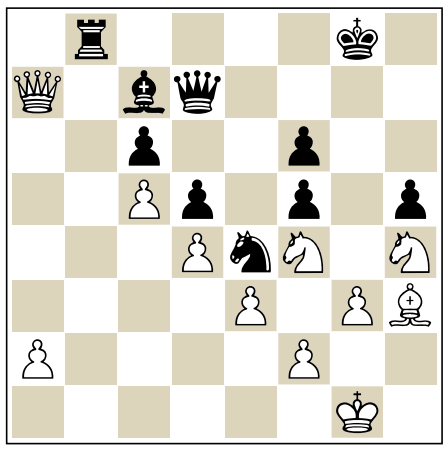
25.♘xg5 is only enough for a draw, as after 25...fxg5 26.♗xd5+ cxd5 27.♕g6+ ♕g7 28.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 29.♖xc7+ Black can harass the active rook with 29...♖f7.

25.♘f4!? deserved serious attention, though. E.g. 25...♖ab8 26.♘h4 (26.♘xh5 ♖xb7 27.♕xb7 ♔f7 28.♘h4 also gives great compensation to White) 26...♖xb7 27.♕xb7 ♖b8 28.♕xa7 ♖b1+ 29.♔h2 ♘e4 30.♗xe4 fxe4 31.♔g2 (31.♘xh5? ♗xg3+), and I would love to have white here.

25...♖fb8 26.♘f4

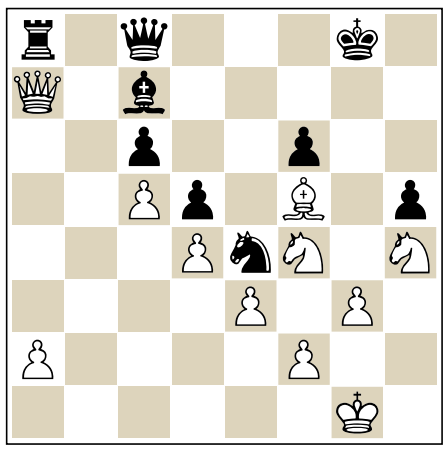
White is better, although the computer claims that the position is equal (it already sees the only salvation that Black has, though). However, for a human being defending both the king and all the pawn weaknesses without having any active plan is a painful task. And with both humans in time-trouble this task becomes impossible for the defender. Tatiana soon erred.

26...♖xb7 27.♕xb7 ♖b8 28.♕xa7 ♘e4 29.♗h3



29...♖b1+?

The rook had to stay on the eight rank in order to protect the king: 29...♕c8! with the idea 30.♗xf5 (30.♘xf5 ♕b7 31.♘e7+ ♔f8 32.♕xb7 ♖xb7 33.♘xc6 ♗xf4 34.gxf4 ♖b1+ 35.♔g2 ♖b2) 30...♖a8!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Anyone entering Ulaanbaatar was warned well in time that FIDE's Women Grand Prix was in town.

was Black's only chance. After 31.♗xc8 ♖xa7 32.♗d7!? ♗xf4 33.♗xc6 ♘xg3 34.♗xd5+ ♔h7 35.♘g2 ♗c7 36.fxg3 ♗xg3 the position is approximately balanced.

30.♔g2 ♖b2 31.♗xf5 ♕g7 31...♖xf2+ 32.♔g1 ♕d8 33.♗xe4, and wins. **32.♘xh5 ♖xf2+ 33.♔g1 ♕h6 34.♕a8+ ♕f8 35.♗e6+** Black resigned.

In this phase of the tournament the leaders were constantly changing places and no one could really predict the overall winner. Ety was replaced in the lead by top-seed Humpy Koneru. Then the Indian lost to Zhao, and this finally gave Hou Yifan the chance to grab the lead after she won her postponed game against Zhu Chen. The young Chinese woman had a critical moment in Round 8, when she had to visit the hospital due to health problems. Luckily for her, this round was just before the second free day, and her opponent generously agreed on a postponement. How Yifan won this important game she describes in her own words.

NOTES BY

Hou Yifan

RL 4.1 – C70
Hou Yifan
Zhu Chen
Ulaanbaatar 2010 (8)

Before this game I got acute enteritis. My dear opponent agreed to postpone the game to the free day, for which I would like here to express my deep gratitude. This gave me valuable time to recover.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.c3

She had played 3...♘ge7 several times in this tournament. Two rounds earlier Sebag chose 4.♘c3, but during my preparation I failed to find any advantage for White after this move, which is why I went for 4.c3.

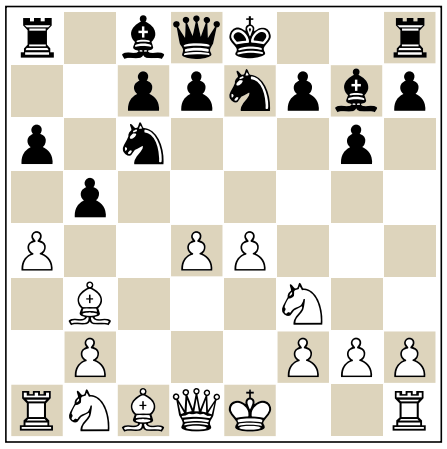
4...a6

Here 4...d5 has also been played, which deserves attention.

5.♗a4 g6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 b5 8.♗b3 ♗g7 9.a4!?

This is a new move and it obviously took my opponent out of her preparation. I wanted to find

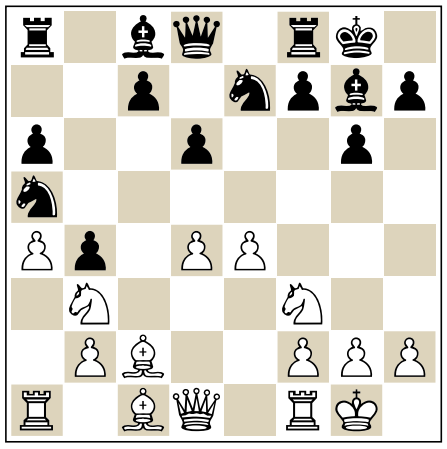
out what structure she was going for. In this position 9.0-0 has been played.



9...b4

She chooses to close the queenside and obtain some space. The alternative is 9...♖b8 10.axb5 axb5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘c3 d6 13.h3, when White has some initiative in the centre.

10.0-0 ♘a5 11.♗c2 d6 12.♘bd2 0-0 13.♘b3



The black knight on a5 is excellently placed and controls the development of my dark-squared bishop, which is why I decided to exchange this strong piece and play a5 to gain some space.

13...♘ec6

Reinforcing the occupation of a5. Also deserving attention is 13...♘xb3 14.♗xb3 ♗g4!? 15.♗e3 d5! 16.e5 f6 17.♖e1 ♗xf3 18.gxf3 c6, with an unclear position, but I prefer Black.

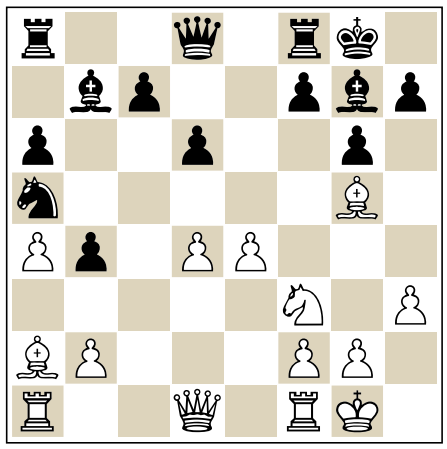
14.h3

Preventing ...♗g4. First I thought about 14.♗g5 ♕e8!? 15.♘fd2??, but after 15...♘xd4! 16.♘xa5 ♕e5 Black would win. Instead of 15.♘fd2, 15.♘xa5 is better, but after 15...♘xa5 16.h3 c5 Black has a good game.

14...♘xb3 15.♗xb3 ♘a5 16.♗a2

The bishop maintains the pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal. If I play 16.♗g5 at once, it may be met by 16...♕d7 17.♗d5 c6 18.♗a2 ♖e8 19.♖e1 c5, with unclear play – White gets a strong centre, but Black has some good play on the queenside.

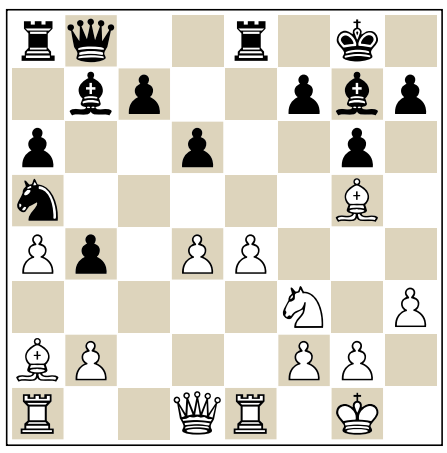
16...♗b7 17.♗g5



17...♕b8?!

She played this move after a few minutes of thinking. But the black queen is far from the centre. It was better to play 17...♕d7 18.♖e1 (after 18.♕d3 ♖ae8 19.♘d2 d5 20.exd5 ♗xd5 21.♗xd5 ♕xd5 22.♗e3 c5 23.♕xa6 cxd4 Black has the initiative) 18...♖ae8! (the most accurate – after 18...♖fe8?! 19.♗d2 c5 20.♖c1 ♖ac8 21.♗b1 White is slightly better) 19.♗d2 c5 20.♗b1 (if 20.♖c1 ♖xe4 21.♖xe4 ♗xe4 22.♘g5 ♗f5 Black is better – now ...♖ae8 is useful) 20...♘c6 21.♗e3 cxd4 22.♘xd4 d5, with complicated play.

18.♖e1 ♖e8



19.♗d2!?

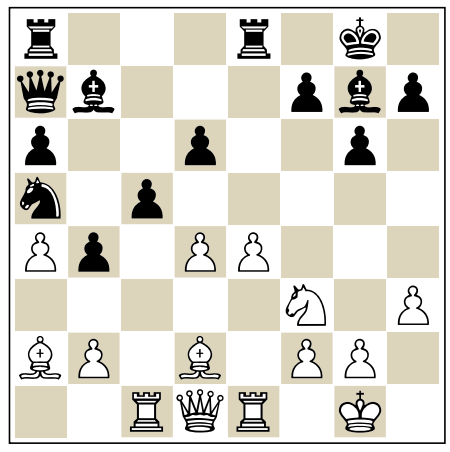
Or 19.♕d3 c5 20.♖ac1 ♗c6 with an unclear position.

19...c5

The best move. After 19...b3 20.♗b1 ♘c4 21.♗c3 White is better. And after 19...♗xe4 20.♘g5 d5 21.f3! (very important – a weaker option is 21.♖xe4 ♖xe4 22.♗xd5 ♖xd4 23.♗xf7+ ♔h8, when White has enough compensation and an attack, but Black can fight) 21...b3 22.fxe4 bxa2 23.♗xa5 f6 24.♘f3 dxe4 25.♘d2 ♕xb2 26.♘c4 ♕b7 27.♕e2 White gets a material advantage.

20.♖c1 ♕a7?!

I think she had missed my following tactic. Better was 20...♗xe4! 21.♘g5 b3! 22.♖xe4 ♖xe4 23.♘xe4 bxa2 24.♗xa5 ♕xb2 25.♗c3 ♕b7 26.♕f3 ♖b8 27.♘f6+ ♔h8 28.♕f4 ♕c7 29.♖a1 ♖b1+ 30.♔h2 and although Black has the a2 pawn, White is a piece up and should be better.



21.dxc5?!

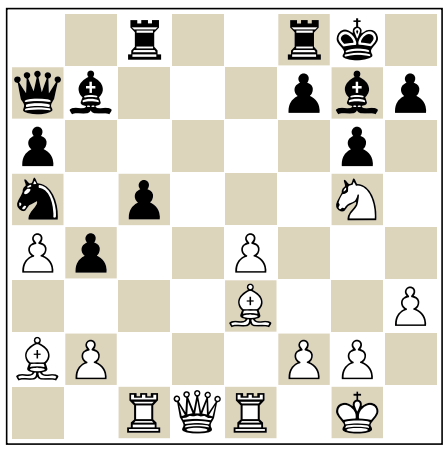
An imprecise move, which gives my opponent some chances of survival. Better was 21.♘g5! b3 22.♗b1 ♕b6 23.♘xf7 ♔xf7 24.♗xa5 ♕xa5 25.♕xb3+, and White wins.

21...dxc5 22.♘g5 ♖f8?

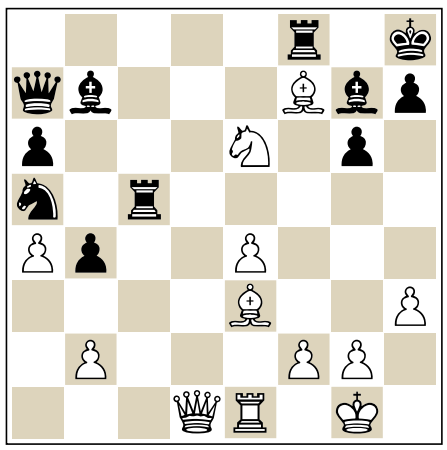
She also misses the strong 22...b3! 23.♗b1 (23.♗xb3 ♘xb3 24.♕xb3 ♗c6 25.♗c3 ♖ab8 26.♕c4 ♗xc3 27.bxc3, and White is slightly better) 23...♖ed8 24.♘xf7 ♖d7 25.e5 ♖xf7 26.♗xa5 c4 27.♖e2 ♕c5 28.♕e1 ♖e8 29.♗c3, when White is better but Black can fight on.

23.♗e3 ♖ac8

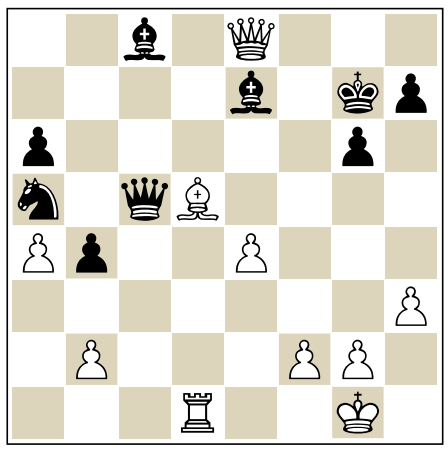
Hou Yifan (first place and a handsome cheque), Antoaneta Stefanova (second place) and Tatiana Kosintseva (third place) at the prize-giving. To the right China's Shen Yang.



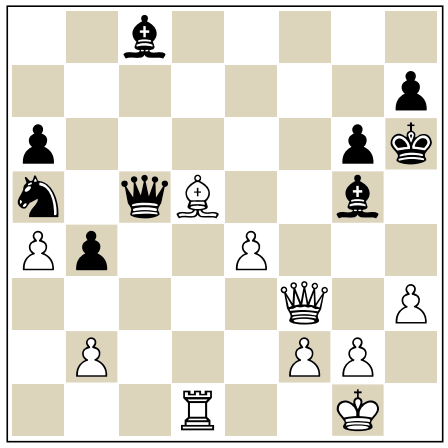
24.♗xf7+!
A tactical blow that I had prepared a long time ago. White wins.
24...♔h8 After 24...♖xf7 25.♘xf7 ♔xf7 26.♕d7+ ♔g8 (26...♔f8 27.♕xc8+! ♗xc8 28.♗xc5+) 27.♕e6+ ♔h8 28.♖xc5 ♕a8 29.♖xa5 ♖e8 30.♕f7 White wins easily.
25.♖xc5?
A bad move. The simple 25.♗e6! wins, as does the beautiful 25.♕g4 ♕b6 26.♕h4 h5 27.♖xc5 ♖xc5 28.♗xc5 ♕xc5 29.♗xg6.
25...♖xc5 26.♘e6?!
Better was 26.♕d6!? ♖c6 (26...♖fc8 27.♗e6) 27.♕xf8+ ♗xf8 28.♗xa7, with an easy win with two pawns up.



26...♕b8! This is what I had missed. I only saw 26...♖xf7 27.♕d8+ ♗f8 28.♗xc5 ♕a8 29.♕xa5, which wins easily.
27.♘xf8 ♕xf8 28.♗xc5 ♕xc5 29.♕d8+ ♗f8!
Both of us were already in time-trouble, having only a few minutes for a dozen moves. She finds the most tenacious move.
29...♕f8 is bad: 30.♕c7 ♗f6 31.♖c1, and White wins.
30.♖d1 ♔g7 31.♗d5 ♗c8
Keeping the bishop pair. If 31...♗e7 then 32.♕g8+ ♔h6 33.♕e6 ♕c2 34.♖f1 ♗c5 35.♕f6, and White wins.
32.♕e8 ♗e7?!



33.♕f7+? Missing the simple 33.♗g8!?, which wins a piece or leads to mate. **33...♔h6 34.♕f4+ ♗g5 35.♕g3 ♕c2 36.♕f3 ♕c5**



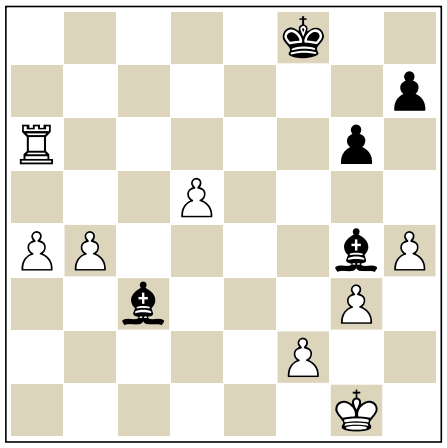
37.g3?! Once again a dubious move in time-trouble. Bet-

ter was 37.h4! ♗e7 38.♗g8 ♕h5 39.♕f4+ g5 40.hxg5+ ♔g7 41.♖c1, and White wins.

37...♕e7 38.h4 ♗f6 39.♕e3+ ♔g7 40.♕b6 ♕d8 41.♕xb4 ♘c6 42.♕c5 ♗g4?!

Tougher was 42...♘e5 43.♕a7+ ♔h6 44.♔g2 ♗g4 45.♖c1 ♗f3+ 46.♔f1, when White is winning but Black can try to exploit the weak light squares.

43.♖c1 ♘e7 44.♕c7 ♕xc7 45.♖xc7 ♔f8 46.b4 ♗e5 47.♖a7 ♗c3 48.♖xa6 ♘xd5 49.exd5



49...♗xb4?

Speeding up the end, but White also wins after 49...♗f3 50.b5 ♗xd5 51.♖a7.

50.♖f6+

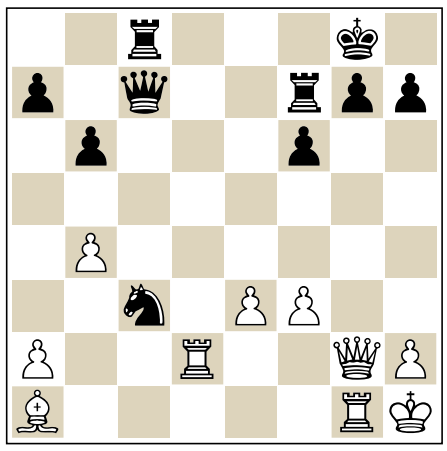
Black resigned.

Most of the participants had problems with the food throughout the event. I do not know why, as the food was delicious and I couldn't call it exotic. Apparently it was the overall change that caused the discomfort.

Like in a good movie, the tournament winner was decided in the final round. Hou Yifan was leading Ety by half a point, but we had the white pieces. An unpleasant change in the schedule slightly spoilt the tournament finish when the players were asked to play at 10.00 a.m. The organizers insisted on this hour, as it would give them the chance to comfortably prepare the closing ceremony at the theatre. As there were public speeches scheduled for later in the evening, the closing should take place at 5 p.m.

In fact, the organizers' original proposal was that the games start at 9.00 a.m.! On a night owl like Ety this drastic change of the starting time had a huge psychological impact. We tried to lodge a protest, pointing at the fact that for such a change you need the signature of the FIDE President, but the FIDE official could not contact him.

There was only one critical moment in the game, but it could have changed the name of the tournament winner.



Stefanova-Hou Yifan
position after 28.♕g2

After a stubborn and careful defence, Hou Yifan decided to activate her knight with: **28...♘b5?** But this moves blunders a whole pawn. However, Ety missed her chance. **29.e4?** The simple 29.♗xf6 wins a pawn, as taking the bishop, 29...♖xf6?, loses even more material after 30.♖c2. Now the position is balanced again and a draw was agreed after sixty moves.

Thus the young Chinese remained the only undefeated player and deservedly won the tournament. The tradition that each tournament from the series sees a new winner was kept. Stefanova finished sole second, and there was a tie for third place between Kosintseva, Zhao and Koneru to finish in this order.

A quick look at the overall standings of the Grand Prix reveals that the leader now is Hou Yifan with one first, one second, and one shared second place, or a total of 410 points. However, she has already completed her four tournaments and has to wait and see if some of her two closest rivals, Nana Dzagnidze or Humpy Koneru, will catch up with her. The final stage is scheduled to be held in Santiago, Chile, but the earthquakes that they suffered there may hinder the organizational process. There are rumours that the tournament will be postponed or even cancelled.

In any case, for the good of women chess I hope that this Grand Prix series will continue in the future.

Ulaanbaatar 2010 — **cat. X**

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	Hou Yifan	IGM	CHN	2577	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	1	8
2	Antoaneta Stefanova	IGM	BUL	2560	½	*	1	0	0	½	1	1	½	1	1	1	7½
3	Tatiana Kosintseva	IGM	RUS	2562	½	0	*	1	½	½	½	½	1	0	1	1	6½
4	Zhao Xue	IGM	CHN	2462	½	1	0	*	1	1	0	0	1	½	½	1	6½
5	Humpy Koneru	IGM	IND	2600	½	1	½	0	*	1	½	1	½	1	0	½	6½
6	Maia Chiburdanidze	IGM	GEO	2514	½	½	½	0	0	*	1	½	0	1	1	1	6
7	Xu Yuhua	IGM	CHN	2488	0	0	½	1	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	1	5½
8	Shen Yang	WGM	CHN	2435	½	0	½	1	0	½	½	*	½	½	0	1	5
9	Zhu Chen	IGM	QAT	2476	0	½	0	0	½	1	½	½	*	1	1	0	5
10	Sebag Marie	IGM	FRA	2519	0	0	1	½	0	0	½	½	0	*	1	½	4
11	Batkhuyag Munguntuul	IM	MGL	2421	0	0	0	½	1	0	0	1	0	0	*	1	3½
12	Yildiz Betul	WIM	TUR	2235	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	0	1	½	0	*	2

With two rounds to go, the outcome of the fifth NH Tournament looked like a foregone conclusion. The Rising Stars were cruising to match victory and Anish Giri looked like the inevitable winner of the coveted ticket to the Amber Tournament. Two days later the Rising Stars indeed defeated the Experience team 26-24, but Giri had to swallow the biggest disappointment in his young career. The 16-year-old Dutchman first spoiled a win against rival Loek van Wely and then lost his first game in the tournament, allowing Hikaru Nakamura to draw level. In the ensuing blitz play-off the American was merciless. In Giri's shoes many players would have tried to ban this disaster from their minds as soon as possible, but with admirable composure and wit he once again showed himself to be a great champion in the bud and agreed to write his story from 'the loser's perspective'.

NEW IN CHESS

'First you think: start to slowly

Anish Giri

The NH tournament, in which five experienced grandmasters are teaching a few lessons to five so-called Rising Stars, is one of those great gifts the chess world has been receiving from Mr. Van Oosterom. Like a little brother of the Melody Amber tournament, the NH tournament, which takes place in Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky in the heart of Amsterdam, is organized according to the highest standards. The only negative thing about the whole event that I can think of is that, unfortunately, this fifth edition seems to have been the last one.

When everything still looked rosy. In his Round 9 game against Loek van Wely, Anish Giri confidently and aggressively withdraws his bishop to h4.

what the hell? Then you get wet from the inside out.'

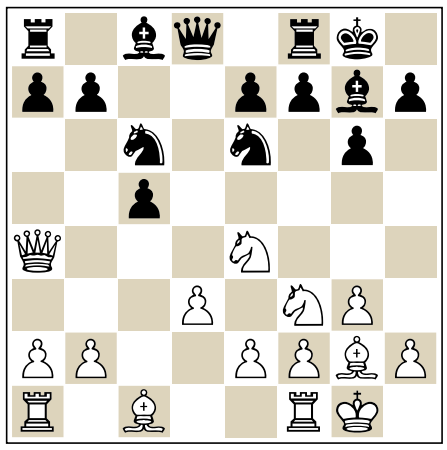
Now I guess it's time to turn to the tournament, and I am very sorry for you, my poor reader, since you will have to enjoy the story from the 'loser's' perspective ☺.

After a wonderful opening ceremony with lots of delicious food and a great performance by a Dutch singer of Idols fame, I got my pairing. I must say, it was excellent: first I had to 'survive' two big guys – Boris Gelfand and Peter Svidler, then I could start rolling against Ljubomir Ljubojevic (who, in his best years, could start his 'rolling' against anyone...), my well-known compatriot (and biggest enemy ☺) Loek van Wely, and at the end I had Peter Heine Nielsen, who arrived fresh and happy after the Anand-Topalov match ☺.

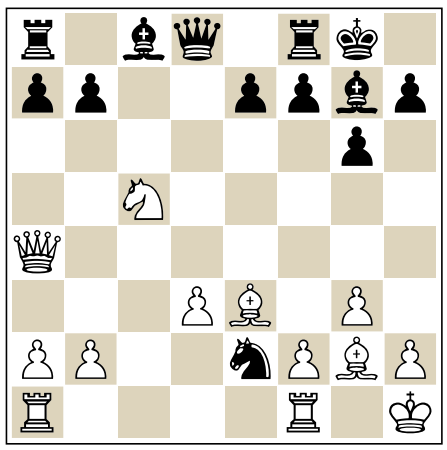
My first two games were great pieces of preparation and went ideally. And as we all know, ideal games nowadays are all drawn...

EO 51.8 – A34
Anish Giri
Peter Svidler
Amsterdam 2010 (1)

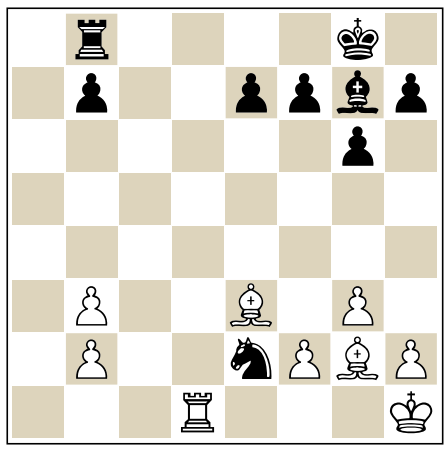
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 c5 8.♕a4 ♘c7!? 9.d3 ♘c6 10.♘e4! ♘e6



11.♗e3! After the almost-novelty 8...♘c7 I very much doubted that Peter was expecting to end up in trouble two moves later. Funnily enough, 8...♘c7 scared the hell out of me and my coach the whole morning before the game, and it was only at the very last minute that we found the correct idea.
11...♘cd4 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4! I remembered the computer showing something like this as a possibility, followed by a random ...a5 somewhere, but, hey, humans would never play like this, would they?
13.♘xc5 ♘xe2+ 14.♔h1



14...a5!! To say I was surprised is putting it mildly. The move looks totally random, but in fact it's simply the only move! After agreeing with myself about the fact that my opponent was a genius that day I decided to start calculating and realized that Black is actually defending his a-pawn, which will be pretty important later on.
14...♘d4 is logical and therefore bad: 15.♘xb7 ♗xb7 16.♗xb7 ♖b8 17.♗e4!, protecting the f5-square.
15.♖ab1
I didn't have anything better, and in fact I still managed to cause my opponent some problems, but again he found a very accurate equalizer!
15...♖b8 16.♘b3 ♗e6 17.♕xa5 ♗xb3 18.♕xd8 ♖fxd8 19.axb3 ♖xd3! 20.♖fd1 ♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1

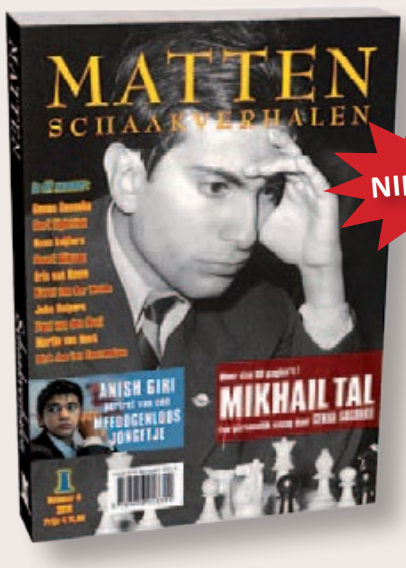


21...♘d4!!
Another fantastic idea, which I had seen from a distance, but I thought it wouldn't work due to 22.♖xd4...
22.♗f4 22.♖xd4?? is easily refuted by 22...♗xd4 23.♗xd4 ♖d8, of course, after which the 'pin' decides... The same thing happens after 22.♗xd4 ♖d8.
22...e5 23.♖xd4 exf4 24.♖xf4 ♗e5 25.♖c4 b6 26.♖c2 ♖d8 27.♗f1 ♖d1 28.♔g2 ♖b1 29.♖e2 ♗f6 30.♖d2 ♖xb2 31.♖xb2 Draw.

CA 5.12 – E05
Boris Gelfand
Anish Giri
Amsterdam 2010 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.g3 ♗e7 5.♗g2
Gelfand is a well-known expert in the Catalan, but I was and still am

"Een heerlijk blad voor bij de open haard" **Het Parool**



- Genna Sosonko op z'n best: het fenomeen Tal
- Karel van der Weide's Last Tango
- portret van een meedogenloos jongetje (Anish G.)
- een hilarische dag uit het leven van Gata Kamsky
- Gert Ligterink: de foto
- dwars door Europa met Vishy Anand
- een mysterieuze handtekening van Bobby Fischer
- en veel meer

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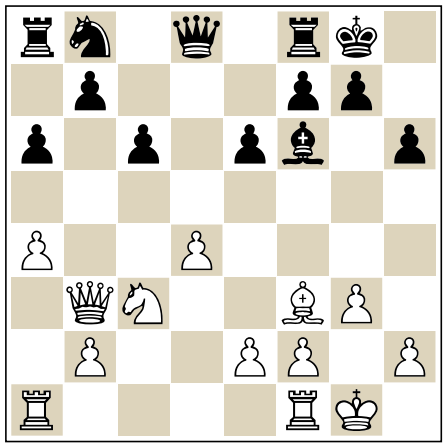
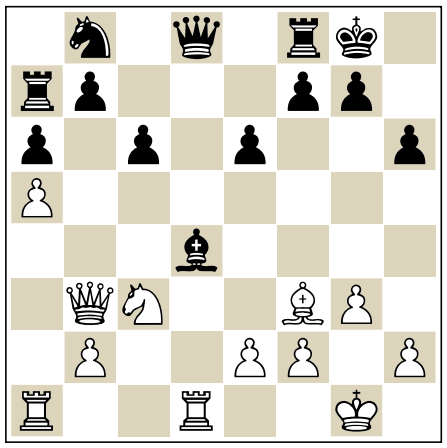
quite confident about my knowledge of it.

5...0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♕c2 a6 8.a4 ♗d7 9.♕xc4 ♗c6 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘c3 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 c6 14.♕b3



This move wasn't a big surprise for me, and I believe I had found a few ways to meet it. Over the board, however, it took me nearly an hour to figure out everything and put everything I remembered in the correct order.

14...♖a7 15.a5 ♗xd4! 16.♖fd1



16...b5!! A fantastic resource that I was very proud of. After I found it, I realized that I already knew it and that, in fact, all I had done was successfully recalling it.

17.e3 ♕f6 18.♘xb5 ♗xb2! 19.♘xa7 ♗xa1 20.♔g2 ♗c3 21.♕b7 ♕e5 22.♘xc6 ♘xc6 23.♕xc6

Draw.

After these first two games, which in a way were very similar (problems in the opening solved by some miraculous tactics), I wasn't too pessimistic. I wasn't particularly happy with the result, but I was satisfied with my play and shape.

NEW IN CHESS

'Against PH I forgot to check the Grünfeld on my HP.'

With the third game I was supposed to start my roll, and after the opening I had little doubt that anything could go wrong. However, after a few minutes of abstract thoughts I just gave away a piece for... hmm, well, it doesn't matter... So, I just gave away a piece and then decided that maybe now, being a piece down, I should start thinking. After about an hour I decided to choose which losing way was the nicest. Then, luckily enough, I found a great resource, and although I was practically always worse, I kept on playing well and at the end got away with a draw.

The next day, I had to play Loek, and after such a shameful game against Ljubo I wasn't exactly intending to play solidly. I decided not to annotate this game (Loek must be thankful for that... ☺). In fact, the Dutch king, who keeps refusing to give up his top spot in Holland (he is now rated just two Elo points higher than me! ☺), didn't have his best day and basically just gave away the point.

For this I was very thankful, and when I had to play Peter Heine Nielsen with white, I was of course very ambitious. Against PH I forgot to check the Grünfeld on my HP, since I was thinking that it would be too obvious for him to go for it...☺. In fact, over the board I managed to pick a very correct line. His memory wasn't expecting the g3 Grünfeld, and then I basically just won a pawn. After we exchanged a few inaccuracies, I got a winning position (apparently my inaccuracies were more accurate), and then I started hesitating, looking for the most winning continuation... and if not for his time-trouble, he could have escaped with half a point (but then again, if not for my time-trouble, I wouldn't have given him that chance ☺).

On the rest day I was very happy with the way the tournament was going for me. And I didn't mind joining an excursion under typical Dutch weather conditions (rain, rain and more rain!). It turned out to be a great experience nevertheless: getting stuck somewhere with the bus, then a few people, including my kind coach, moving parked cars to make space for our bus, missing the steam train and then catching up with it at the next station... In short, it was a lot of fun and it gave me a lot of positive emotions for the next half.

INTERMEZZO

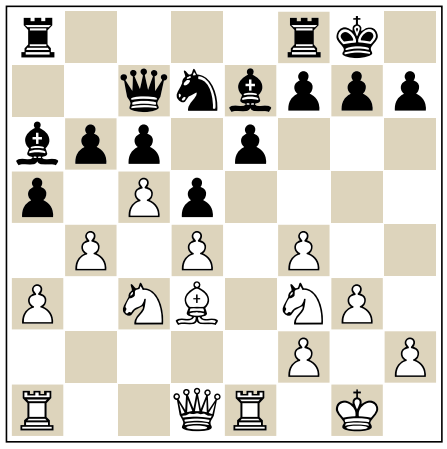
At this point we briefly interrupt Anish Giri's narrative to say a bit more about the situation in the tournament. Halfway through, the Rising Stars were leading the Experience team 13½-11½. In the fight for the Amber ticket Giri was the proud leader, half a point ahead of Fabiano Caruana and a full point ahead of the highest-rated Rising Star, Hikaru Nakamura.

The American returned to Amsterdam to avenge his poor performance of 2009, when he was ill all through the event and didn't even come close to qualifying for Amber. This time he was fully determined and (before he lost two) burst away with 2½ from 3, including an instructive win over Nielsen.

NOTES BY
Hikaru Nakamura

QO 1.5 – D37
Hikaru Nakamura
Peter Heine Nielsen
Amsterdam 2010 (3)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗e7 4.♘f3 ♘f6 5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.c5 ♘h5 8.♗d3 ♘xf4 9.exf4 b6 10. b4 a5 11.a3 c6 12.0-0 ♕c7 13.g3 ♗a6 14.♖e1



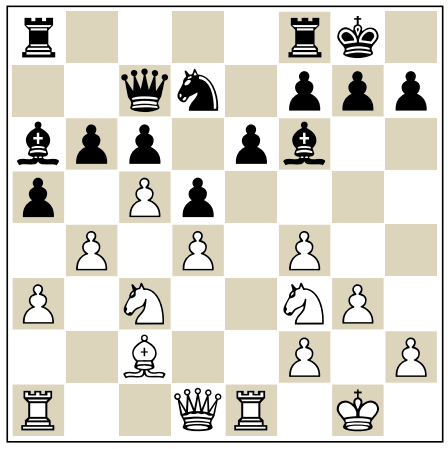
14...♗f6

This move may be alright objectively, but allowing White to keep the light-squared bishops on the board can only be helpful to one side.

After 14...♗xd3 15.♕xd3 ♖a7 16.♖ac1 axb4 17.axb4 ♗f6 18.h4 bxc5 19.bxc5 ♖b8 20.♖e3 ♖b3 21.♕c2 ♖b4 22.♘e2 ♕b8 Black is completely fine, and maybe even slightly better, as was seen in Ivanchuk-Bruzon, Havana 2010.

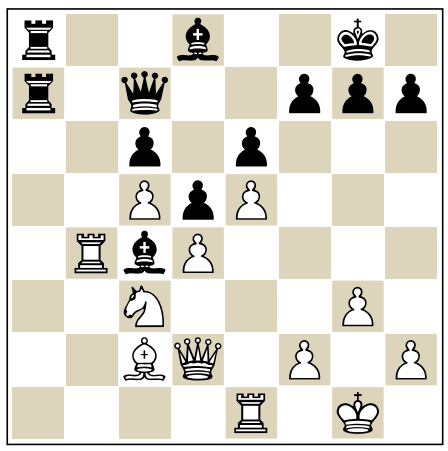
15.♗c2!?

A new move. 15.♘e5 yields no tangible advantage either: 15...♗xe5 16.fxe5 ♗xd3 17.♕xd3 ♖a7 18.♖eb1 b5 19.a4 axb4 20.♖xb4 f6 21.exf6 ♘xf6 22.♕e2 ♖e8 23.♖e1 bxa4 24.♖xa4 ♖xa4 25.♘xa4 ♕a5 26.♘b6 e5, and once again Black is completely fine, as in Krasenkow-Riazantsev, France 2009.



15...♗c4 After 15...bxc5 16.bxc5 ♘xc5 17.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 18.dxc5 g6 19.♘e5 ♗g7 20.♕c2 ♖fb8 21.♘a4 White is better due to the outposts on b6 and e5.

16.♕d2 ♖a7 17.♘e5 axb4 18.axb4 bxc5 19.bxc5 ♘xe5 20.fxe5 ♗e7 21.♖ab1 ♖fa8 22.♖b4 ♗d8



23.♘e4?

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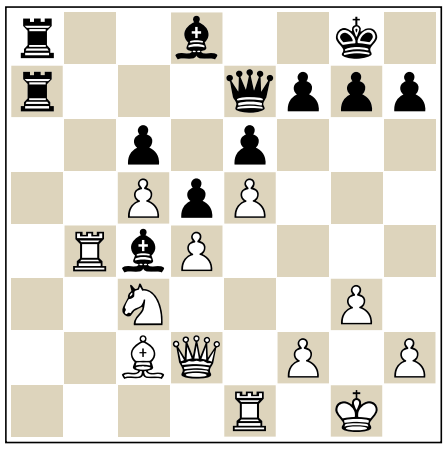
This move is incorrect, as I had overlooked a simple tactic on the following move.

Instead, 23.♖eb1, taking control of the b-file first, is much better. In that case Black can go 23...♖a1, or 23...♕e7 24.♔g2! ♗a5 25.♖b8+ ♗d8 26.♖xa8 ♖xa8 27.♗d3, and Black should be able to hold the position, but I certainly would have made Nielsen suffer for a long time.

23...♕e7 24.♘c3

After 24.♖eb1 Black has 24...♗a2!. This was the move I had overlooked, as White is close to winning if not for this tactical shot.

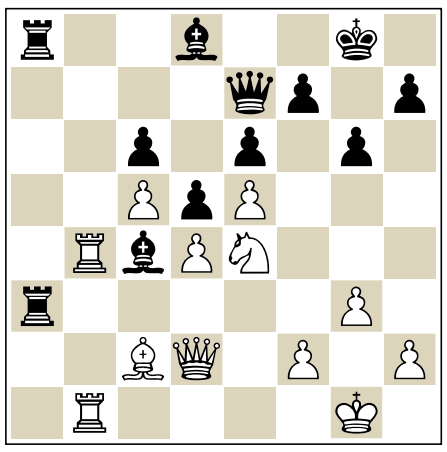


24...♖a3?

Nielsen inaccurately tries to punish my error by going for more than just equality.

Correct was 24...♗a5 25.♖b2 ♖b7 26.♖xb7 ♕xb7 27.♖a1, and Black should have no problems at all here.

25.♖eb1 g6? 26.♘e4!



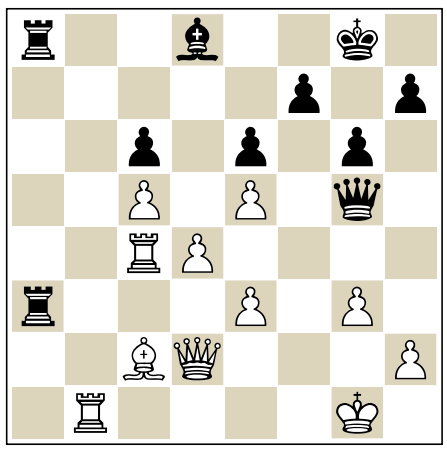
26...dxe4 After 26...♕f8 27.♘f6+ ♗xf6 28.exf6 ♗b5 (in the variation 28...♖f3 29.♗a4 ♖c8 30.♖b6 ♖xf6 31.♗xc6 the c-pawn is simply too fast) 29.♔g2 ♕d8 30.♕f4

NEW IN CHESS

Hikaru Nakamura returned to Amsterdam with a mission.

♖a2 31.♖1b2 it is hard to see how Black can hold the position long-term, as h4-h5xg6 and an attack on the h-file are looming.

27.♖xc4 e3 28.fxe3 ♕g5

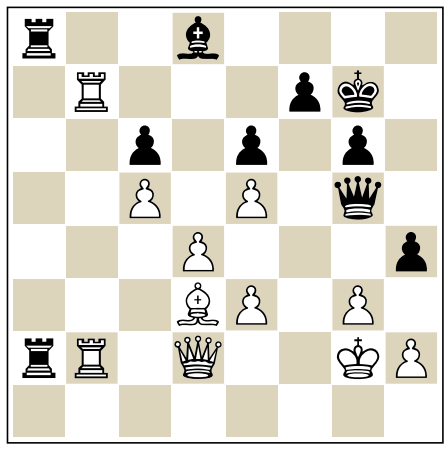


29.♗d3? Incorrect. Optically 29.♗b3 looks wrong, but it is actually correct, as my move gives Black close to equality with correct play. After 29..♗b3 ♕h5 30.♔g2 ♗g5 31.♖c3 ♕g4 32.♕c2 everything is controlled here and I should be able to eventually consolidate.

29...h5

White stands better in the endgame after 29...♕h6 30.♔g2 ♗g5 31.♖e1 ♖b8 32.h4 (the only way to prevent Black from doubling rooks on the third rank) 32...♗d8 33.♗c2 ♗a5 34.♕c1 ♗xe1 35.♕xa3 ♕h5 36.♕d3 ♕g4 37.e4 ♗xg3 38.♕f3 (if 38.♕xg3 ♕e2+ picking off the rook on c4) 38...♕xf3+ 39.♔xf3 ♗xh4 40.♗a4 ♖c8 41.d5 exd5 42.exd5 cxd5 43.♖xh4 ♖xc5, but Black should draw without any major problems.

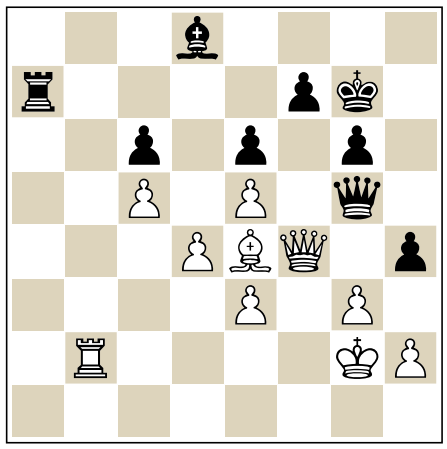
30.♖cb4 h4 31.♔g2 ♔g7 32.♖b7 ♖a2 33.♖1b2



33...♗a5?

The decisive mistake. White would be only slightly better after 33...♖xb2 34.♖xb2 ♖a1 35.♕f2 ♕h5 36.♕e2 ♕h6 37.♕f3 hxg3 38.h3 ♕g5 39.♗e4 ♖a3 40.♖e2.

34.♕f2 ♖xb2 35.♖xb2 ♖a7 36.♕f4 ♗d8 37.♗e4



37...h3+?

Desperation.

38.♔xh3 ♕h5+ 39.♔g2 ♕d1 40.♖f2

Nielsen resigned here, as he is down two pawns and without any counterplay.

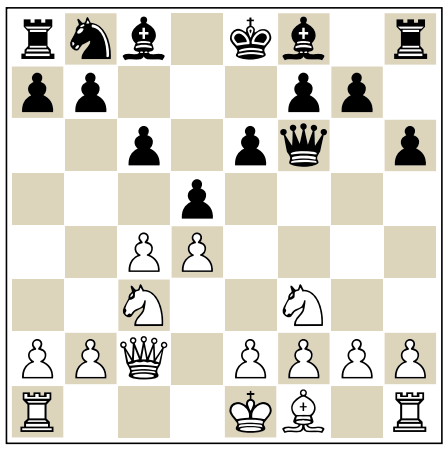
After this brief detour let's return to the tale of Anish Giri, who picks up the thread at the start of the second half of the tournament.

My first two games after the free day were again pretty good. I easily equalized versus Peter Svidler (even accidentally introducing a strong over-the-board-novelty, pretending to have some understanding of what was going on). Against Gelfand I showed very good preparation after I picked 1.e4. Gelfand, of course, understands that I belong to that small group on earth who know why the Petroff is bad (just joking, guys, give it up, it's a DRAW ☺). So I wasn't exactly surprised by his Najdorf. Although for some reason I was expecting a Gelfand variation to occur after my 6.♗g5 ☺, I nevertheless was very familiar with the rare Dutch 6...♘bd7. Boris, however, showed why he is Boris Gelfand and kept on making good moves, not caring about my 1:59 on the clock, which was still 1:59 on move 17, while his time was slowly burning down. The game remained unbalanced on the one hand and balanced on the other, but in his time-trouble Boris got overambitious and might have been punished. Still, I was happy with the draw.

Playing my second game versus Ljubojevic, I told myself not to give away pieces anymore. It was very hard, but in the end I managed to give only a pawn and won a nice game.

SL 6.6 – D43
Ljubomir Ljubojevic
Anish Giri
Amsterdam 2010 (8)

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗xf6 ♕xf6 7.♕c2

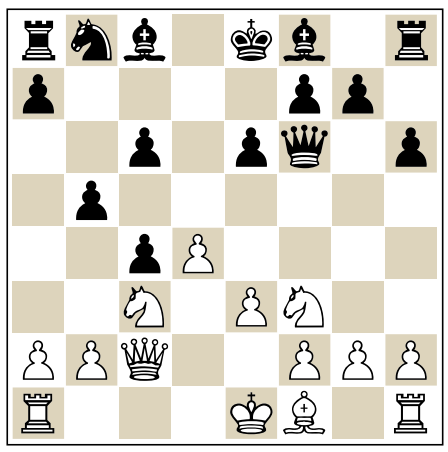


This is not the most popular move, but I wasn't so happy with it, since I knew that after a long theoretical line all the pieces get exchanged and a draw can be agreed. I nevertheless decided to go for the main line.

7...dxc4

7...♘d7 8.e4 dxe4 9.♕xe4 is White's point. I think White is considered to be slightly better here, but due to the two black bishops the position is very balanced, of course.

8.e3 b5

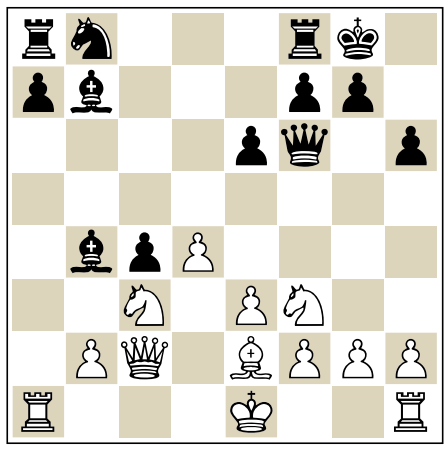


9.a4 9.♘xb5 got me very curious over the board... It was only the fact that I was one hundred percent sure that we were in the theory which saved me from a cold sweat... ☺: 9...cxb5 10.♕e4, and after a while I realized I had more than enough compensation after, for example, 10...♗b4+ 11.♔d1 0-0 12.♕xa8 ♗d7 13.♕e4 ♗c6 14.♕g4 ♘d7.

9...♗b7 10.axb5 cxb5 11.♘xb5 ♗b4+ 12.♘c3

12.♘d2 should not be dangerous. Or maybe it should, but then for White: 12...0-0!? 13.♘c7 ♘d7 (13...e5!?) 14.♘xa8 ♖xa8 15.♗xc4 ♘b6!?, followed by taking on g2 or ♕g5, with compensation.

12...0-0 13.♗e2



13...♖c8

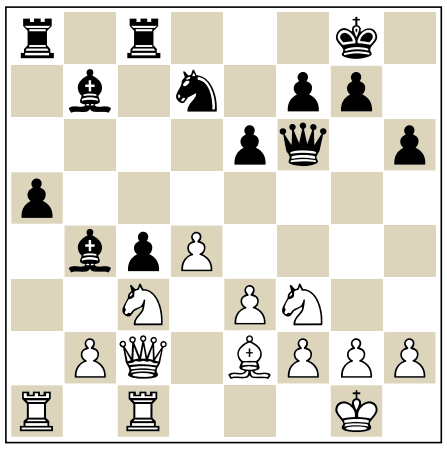
13...♘d7 would lead to a transposition, but somehow my memory told me that 13...♖c8 was more cautious. Unfortunately, my memory is not always telling me the truth, but this time it didn't matter... And anyway, there are a few people who have bigger problems with their memory... You know

NEW IN CHESS

'Playing my second game versus Ljubojevic, I told myself not to give away pieces anymore. In the end I managed to give only a pawn and won a nice game.'

whom I am talking about... ☺ (Giri refers to Loek van Wely, who lost to Nakamura with black, playing a move that he had indicated himself as being a blunder in the previous issue of New In Chess! – ed.)

14.0-0 ♘d7 15.♖fc1 15.♕a4 can be met by the beautiful 15...a5 (or the simple 15...♕e7). **15...a5**



16.♕d1!?

A new move, but in this unspectacular position it doesn't matter so much which move you make. Having said that, this move was very unpleasant to me, since I was afraid of the plan with ♘d2, ♗f3, with dead and total equality.

16.♘a4 is the main move: 16...♖ab8 17.♕d1 e5, with total liquidation. I guess I might have deviated somewhere, thanks to a position that can afford a few deviations.

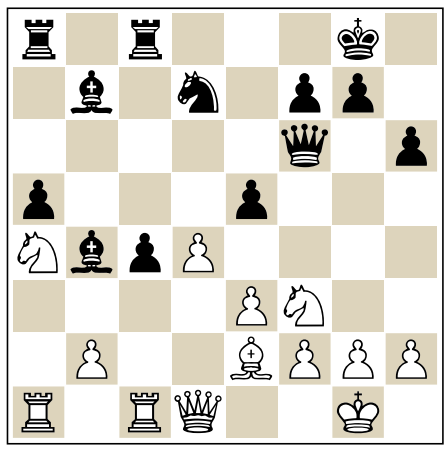
16.♘d2, however, would be even worse for me, since the 16...e5 that I was thinking about was possibly not good. So: 16...♘b6 (16...e5?! 17.♘xc4 exd4 18.exd4, and d4 is untouchable due to ♖d1) 17.♗f3 ♕e7, with equality. And as long as White is not pushing e4-e5, Black has no winning chances. In the game Edouard-Fressinet, which was played in the French league, my team mate got overambitious, did execute the above-mentioned plan and eventually lost.

16...e5!?

I was so annoyed about that ♘d2 plan that I decided to do anything to prevent it...

17.♘a4

Oops. I had missed this move and got pretty unhappy. In fact, as I realized later, I could make any move and nothing bad would happen to my position.



17...♕g6!?

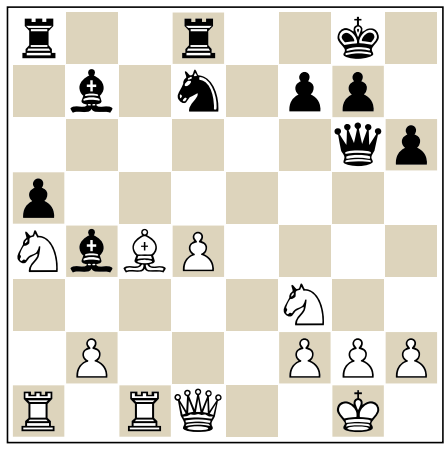
17...♕e6 was my initial intention, but when I was about to play it, I got scared by 18.♕f1. However, now I can do anything, even, for example, 18...♕f5 (or going back with 18...♕f6).

18.♗xc4

18.♖xc4 was what I had expected, since I thought it was more logical for White, being a pawn up, to exchange a few pieces: 18...♖xc4 19.♗xc4 exd4 20.exd4 ♖d8. This was my intention with ample compensation for equality.

18...exd4 19.exd4 ♖d8!?

To be honest, I was so surprised by 18.♗xc4 that I decided to play the same idea that I had intended for 18.♖xc4. The point is, of course, that I want to play ...♘e5. However, better was 19...♖ab8.



20.♕b3!

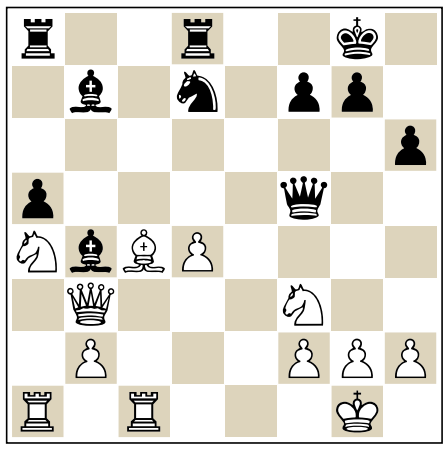
A strong, practical and ambitious move.

I somehow kept on expecting some chicken moves ☺. Maybe because I was taught that when you are a pawn up, that's the way to play it. After 20.♗f1 I could

choose between the safe 20...♕f6, with the idea of winning the pawn back at some point, or moves like 20...♖ab8 or 20...♗d6, with more ambitious aims.

20...♕f5

During the game I was very proud of this move, which I thought was the only one. If my computer could talk he would tell me that I am stupid, because he offers about ten alternatives, 20...♖ab8!? being the most natural move and strong to boot.



21.♘e1?!

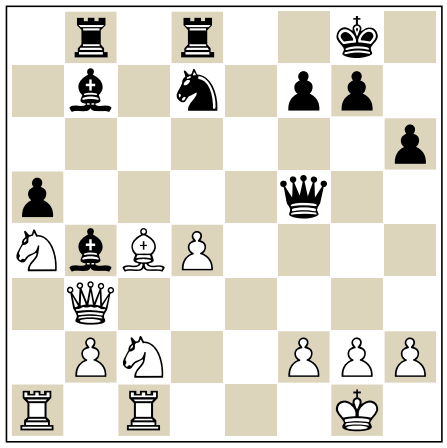
A really over-ambitious move, but also very logical, considering that my opponent was thinking that the position was winning for him. 21.d5 was the strongest move, according to our post-mortem. My opponent was sure he was winning now, although I had my doubts, somewhere not very deep in my mind... At this point 21...♖ac8 is in fact very obvious, simple and good: 22.♘d4 ♕f6 23.♘c6 ♗xc6 24.dxc6 ♘e5! 25.♗d5 ♘xc6, and the material is equal and Black is even slightly better.

21...♘f6? is the logical move, but has to be avoided: 22.♘d4 ♕f4 23.♘c6 ♘g4 24.♕g3, and all Black's attacking illusions are finished.

21...♘e5 is also possible in case Black doesn't feel like calculating anything at all. White has a pawn, but with two bishops Black has no problems, e.g. 22.♘xe5 ♕xe5 23.♖d1 ♖ac8 24.♖ac1 ♖c7 25.♖c2 ♗c8, with a dynamically equal position.

21...♖ab8 22.♘c2

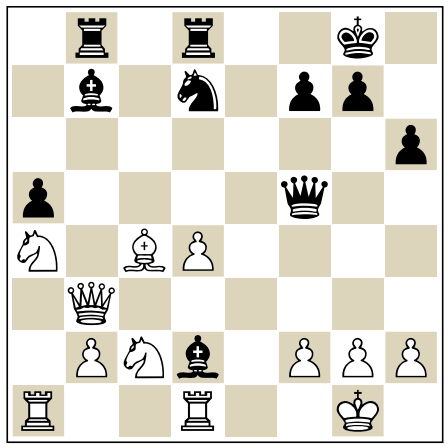
This was pretty shocking. I thought it was simply a blunder, but then I realized that it wasn't that simple.



22...♗d2!

Of course, the following combination is obvious, but as I was short on time, it took me a lot of effort to concentrate and calculate all the complications.

23.♖d1 Here 23.♘e3 is another possibility, but Black is better here as well: 23...♕g5 24.♗xf7+ ♔h8!, and White is in trouble.



23...♗xg2!

I hesitated a bit, since I could just drop my bishop back to f4. However, I trusted my calculations.

24.♗xf7+ ♔h8!

It's more important to have a safe king than to attack the bishop on f7 with 24...♔f8.

25.♕e6

25.♕g3 was the alternative. Here I quite liked 25...♗a8!?, preserving the bishop and getting good compensation.

BAFFLE YOUR OPPONENT!

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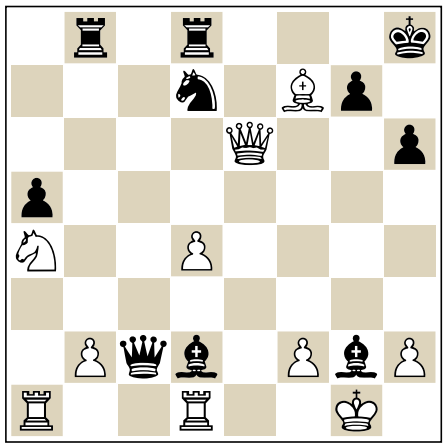
...without having studied large quantities of stuffy theory!

25...♕xc2

Instead of this, 25...♕g5 obviously loses to 26.h4!.



26.♔xg2

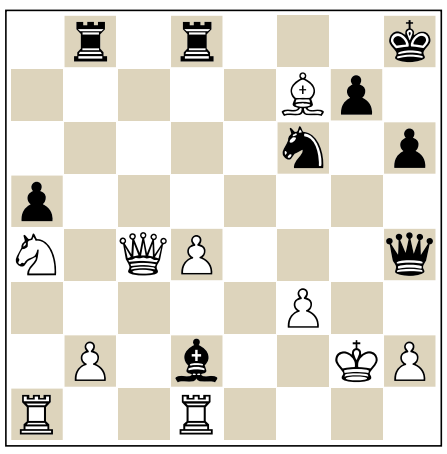
26.♗g6! was practically stronger. but Black is already better anyway.

26...♘f6

From a distance I was aiming for this position, thinking that I would have some compensation... When I got here, I realized that I was basically winning.

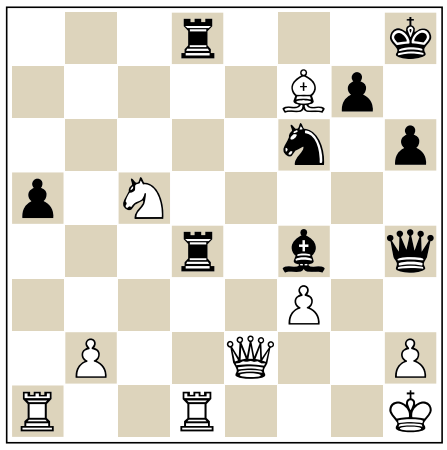
27.♕c4 ♕e4+ 28.f3 ♕h4!

I enjoyed the moment when I saw my opponent writing down '♕f4' and then looking at the board, turning back to the score-sheet and changing 'f' to 'h'.



29.♔h1?

29.♕e2! was the only move to hold on, but Black is better, of course. Practically speaking, considering the time-trouble, he is simply winning. However, the most logical continuation isn't the strongest now: 29...♖xd4?! (better is 29...♗f4!? or 29...♕xd4!?) 30.♔h1 ♖bd8?! 31.♘c5 ♗f4?! – all this seems killing but... a computer is a computer:



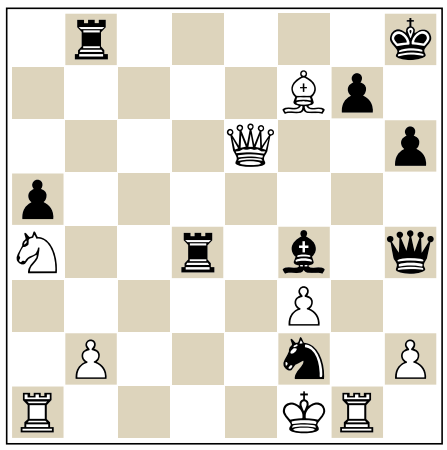
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

32.♖xd4 ♖xd4 33.♘e6! ♖d2 34.♘f8!! ♕xh2+. Now the only winning try is 35.♕xh2 ♖xh2+ 36.♔g1 g5 37.♘g6+ ♔g7 38.♘xf4 ♖d2! 39.♗c4 gxf4 40.♖xa5 ♖xb2 41.♖f5, with a draw.

29...♘e4!

I had seen this in advance and was especially satisfied to play such a move.

30.♖g1 ♘f2+ 31.♔g2 ♖xd4 32.♕e6 ♗f4 33.♔f1



33...♘d1!

The final touch. White resigned. So I went into the sole lead, with practically no more serious pursuers. But...

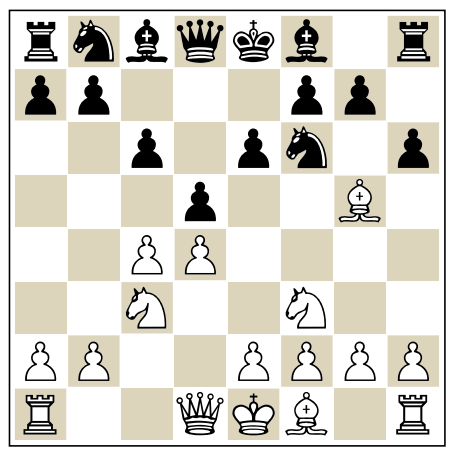
After such a game and having white in the next game, while your 'competitor' Nakamura is half a point adrift and still has to play his nemesis Svidler and top-seed Gelfand, you don't really expect that anything can go wrong anymore.

Basically, I could rely on making two draws, but somehow I felt that the last round is the last round, that black is black and that Peter Heine Nielsen is Peter Heine Nielsen...☺. So I decided to try and push with white against my compatriot in order to clarify things as quickly as possible. In the end, I was punished for my impatience. But at first it seemed that I was going to be rewarded...

SL 7.5 – D44
Anish Giri
Loek van Wely
Amsterdam 2010 (9)

It's hard to comment on this game, to put it mildly, but some things are harder. For example, commenting on the next game ☺.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6



6.♗h4!!

My opponent was very surprised by my aggressive opening choice, but if you play the whole tournament like a winner, why would you have to play the last two rounds like some underdog?

6...dxc4 7.e4 b5!?

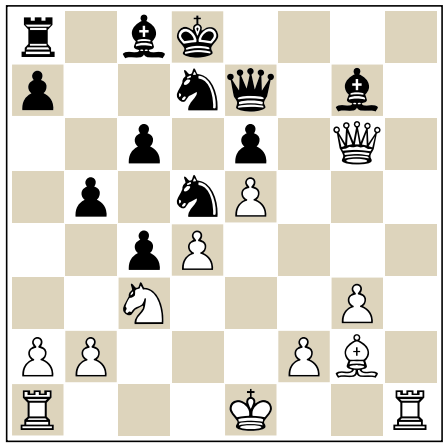
My clever opponent decided to pick the Botvinnik after all. When I asked him why, he said: 'You know, I already had all those theoretical discussions with Kramnik and Shirov, before you were born.' In the style of Nigel S.

The problem, though, is that it's the truth ☺.

8.e5 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5 10.♗xg5 ♘bd7 11.g3!? ♖g8! 12.h4 ♖xg5 13.hxg5 ♘d5 14.g6 fxg6 15.♕g4 ♕e7 16.♗g2 ♔d8 17.♕xg6 ♗g7!?

When my coach showed me this line that morning, I told him:

'Stop, come on, I am not going to remember it anyway.' Damn it. 17...♕b4 was the main move and against this one I did remember what to do.



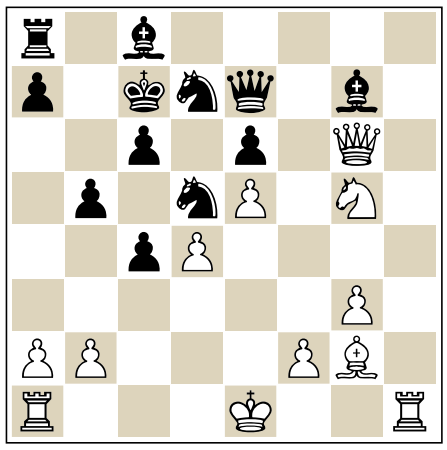
18.♘e4!?

I was so upset about not remembering anything that I decided to play some weird-looking move, without thinking too much... I didn't see why it was bad, but it felt really wrong.

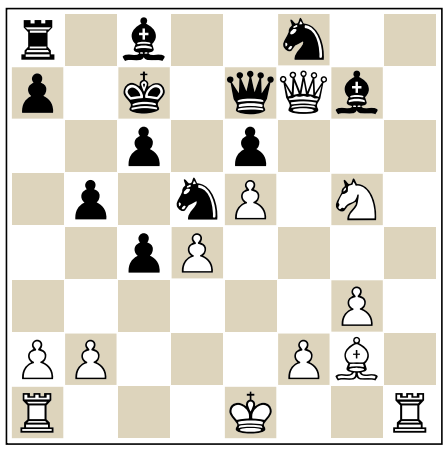
18.♗xd5 was the move I was shown in the morning and I even looked at it myself a bit the day before...

18...♔c7 19.♘g5

Because I played 18.♘e4 rather quickly, I didn't have enough time to realize that I can't put the knight on d6. In order not to look like an idiot I played this move a tempo as if I was a professor and all this was planned. After 19.♘d6?, 19...♗xe5! is something I missed.



19...♘f8?! Allowing the queen swap. 19...♔b6! was a tricky alternative. **20.♕f7** I was actually pretty happy, because the only plan I knew in this line is to exchange the queens and roll the pawns.

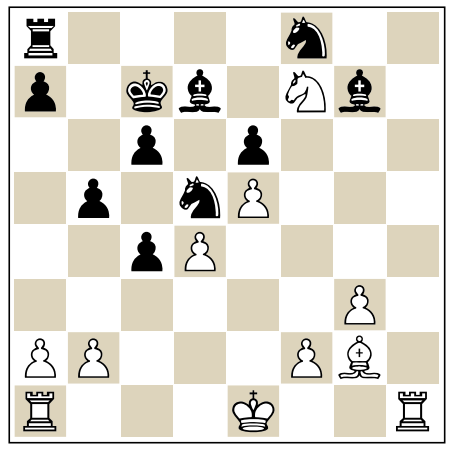


20...♕xf7??

Wow! Why lose a tempo without any concrete reason. Already before this move I had noticed the nasty idea of picking up the guy on g7 with my rook, so I was more than happy now. It's actually simply a blunder, but as Loek said, he wanted to keep the knight on d5. After the normal 20...♗d7 I was planning 21.♗xd5 ♕xf7 22.♘xf7 exd5 23.f4 and try to roll first. It's so unclear that I will just call the position unclear.

21.♘xf7 ♗d7

It's already very hard for Black. It's difficult to see what to do against ♖h5 or ♖h4. Anyway, anything else should have been better, because the text-move loses by force.



22.♖h5! C'est fini, as my French teammates would say. But no, apparently this was just the beginning (this is too much for my French vocabulary...).

How is your German?

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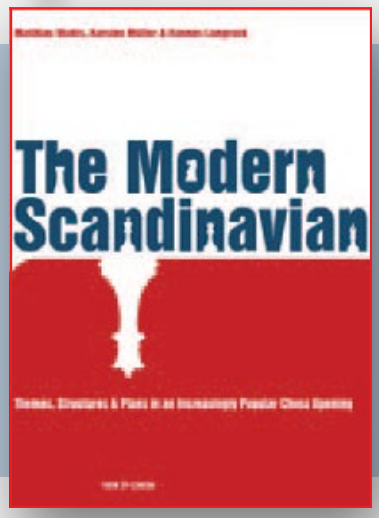

In December will appear **The Modern Scandinavian**: the updated and expanded edition of the legendary *Modernes Skandinavisch*, by Matthias Wahls, Karsten Müller & Hannes Langrock.

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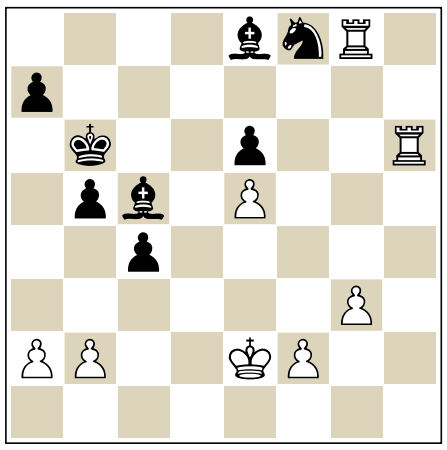
22...♘e7 23.♖g5 ♘fg6 24.♗e4 ♖f8 25.♗xg6 ♘xg6 26.♘d6 ♖h8 27.♔e2 ♖h6 28.♘f7 ♗e8 29.♘xh6 ♗xh6 30.♖g4 c5? 31.♖h1 ♗f8 32.♖h7+ ♔b6 33.dxc5+ ♗xc5 34.♖h6 ♘f8 35.♖g8

So far, I must say, I have been playing very strong and reasonably quickly. Here I was already thinking of things like should I shake hands with my opponent and what dish should I order for dinner. While I was thinking of trying some fish dish, my opponent played:

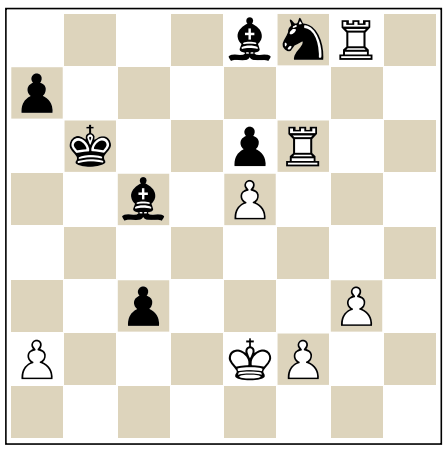


35...b4!

Ah, so I had to concentrate on my game again, but OK, I thought, I'll make two more moves and that's it.

36.♖f6 c3! 37.bxc3 bxc3

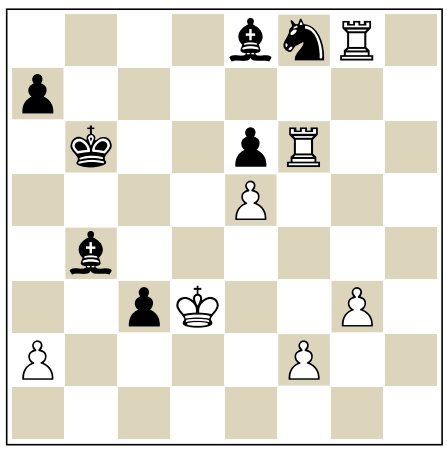
So here I was. I had a lot of time, I believe 30 minutes at least. So under normal circumstances I think I could have found all the wins there are in this position in maybe five minutes. But I was way too impatient and couldn't just concentrate fully and think with a fresh head.



38.♔d3

My intention was 38.♖fxf8. And I almost played it. But you know... I saw this long line (I missed the point of 41.♔d1!), and at the end he queens a pawn... and resigns two moves later probably. But just the fact that the line is so long and that he gets a chance to queen a pawn was so much annoying me that I decided to pick another win. Sorry, dear reader, that you have to read all this nonsense, but I have to somehow explain why I didn't win this ☺: 38...♗b5+ 39.♔e1 ♗b4 40.♖b8+ ♔a6 41.♖xb5 (easily winning is 41.♔d1! ♗a4+ 42.♔e2 ♗b5+, but I actually didn't realize that the position has changed and that I can take the bishop and stop the pawn with my king. The fact that I missed this is not the worst part: 43.♖xb5! ♔xb5 44.♔d3) 41...c2+ 42.♖xb4 c1♕+ 43.♔e2. That's it. And this I saw. And I even wanted to play it. But as I already said, I felt that my opponent somehow didn't deserve to get it.

38...♗b4

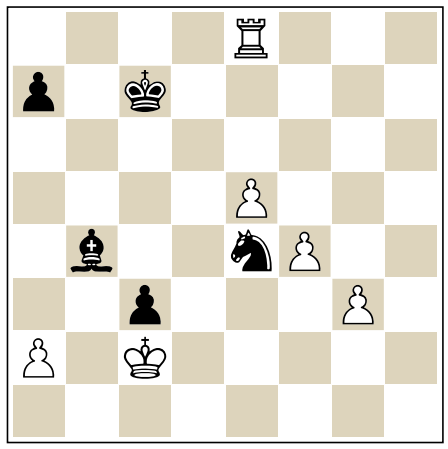


39.♖xe6+??

I was so fed up that I decided to make two moves, reach the time-control (though I had still enough time) drink some water and win. However, here I missed the easiest and simplest win I had: 39.♖fxf8 ♗b5+ 40.♔d4!. First, I was under the illusion that after 40...♗c5+ I couldn't take the c3 pawn. In fact, I simply overlooked this move and only considered 40.♔c2 and the nonsensical 40.♔e3. Then I stopped with this line, not considering 40.♔d4. And yes, guys, I still have this elo of 2670... After 40.♔d4 White wins easily: 40...♗xf8 41.♖xf8 c2 42.♖b8+ ♔c7 43.♖xb5 c1♕ 44.♖c5+.

39...♘xe6 40.♖xe8 ♘c5+ 41.♔c2 ♔c7 42.f4 ♘e4

Here I realized that my opponent was intending to jump with ♘d2-f3 after my initially planned 43.g4, so I decided to calculate the most forcing win... And this win turned out to be a draw. It was pretty unique of me to find that draw. I mean, basically whatever White does is winning for him.

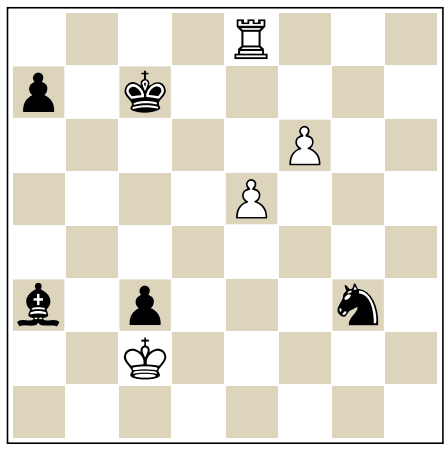


43.f5??

This move is like screaming at Loek: 'Give me that ticket to Amber!' ☺ The way to go was 43.g4 ♘d2 44.a3!. This idea I saw only in combination with 43.f5. Well, I could have figured it out here, but I couldn't stand it anymore and wanted to win as quickly as possible. After 44.a3 White wins: 44...♗a5 45.♖a8! ♔b7 46.e6.

43...♘xg3 44.a3 This was my point, but here it doesn't work.

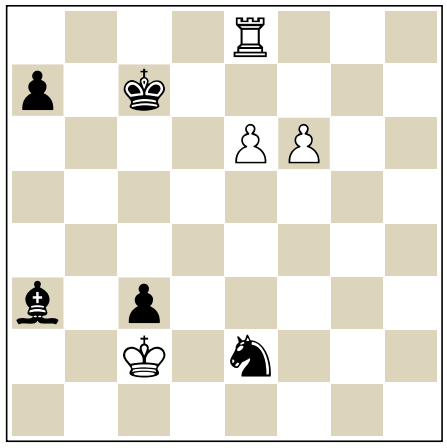
44...♗xa3 45.f6



45...♘e2! 45...♗b4! also works. I had missed that after 46.f7 (46.e6 ♘f5!) 46...♘e2 47.f8♕ there is the intermediate move 47...♘d4+!, with a draw.

46.e6

Even when I played this move I still didn't get my opponent's point. After he played his next move I can't say I felt exactly fantastic.



46...♔d6!! First you think: what the hell? Then you start to slowly get wet from the inside out.

47.e7

47.f7 ♘d4+ 48.♔xc3 ♘xe6 is a very beautiful situation, ♖xe6 frees the a3 bishop. To be honest, I wasn't thinking about the beauty of chess at that moment... ☺

47...♔e6 48.♖g8 ♗xe7 49.fxe7 ♔xe7 50.♖g4 ♔f6

OK. Well, now it's really 'fini', as my French teammates would say. The only problem is that it wasn't fini the way it was supposed to be fini. Draw.

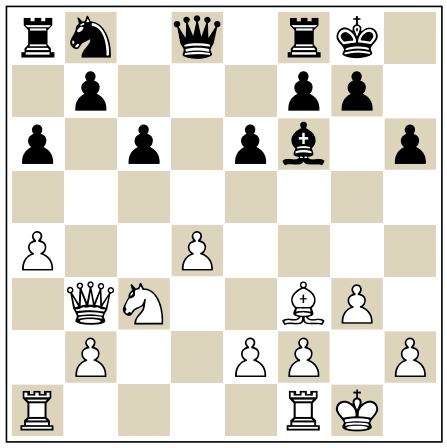
After such a game, it's hard to forgive yourself. But I remained pretty optimistic. I practically needed just a draw in my last game. But it was again my impatience that spoiled my good play.

CA 5.12 – E05
Peter Heine Nielsen
Anish Giri
Amsterdam 2010 (10)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.g3

Peter Heine Nielsen is another big expert in the Catalan (Gelfand I managed to survive). This day I also felt confident enough about the opening.

4...♗e7 5.♗g2 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♕c2 a6 8.a4 ♗d7 9.♕xc4 ♗c6 10.♗g5 The same line? **10...h6 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘c3 ♗xf3 13.♗xf3 c6 14.♕b3** The same move??

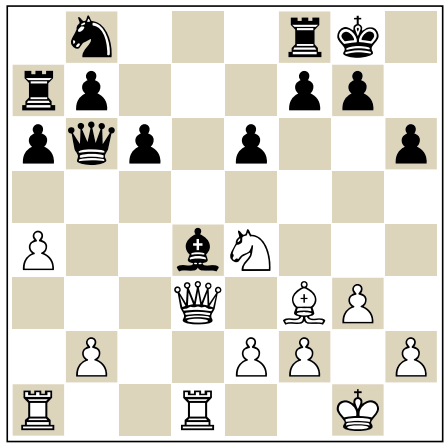


14...♖a7?

I could guess he had prepared something, but I was just too curious about what he had prepared, and too principled. I knew another way to play here, so it wasn't exactly principled, but rather stupid of me to repeat it.

15.♘e4! ♗xd4? I can't imagine I would lose after 15...♗e7.

16.♖fd1 ♕b6 17.♕d3



17...c5?!

This was the move I had been counting on. However, after I played it, I quickly realized that I was actually in trouble...

17...♗e5! would probably lead to a fine position, but it was way

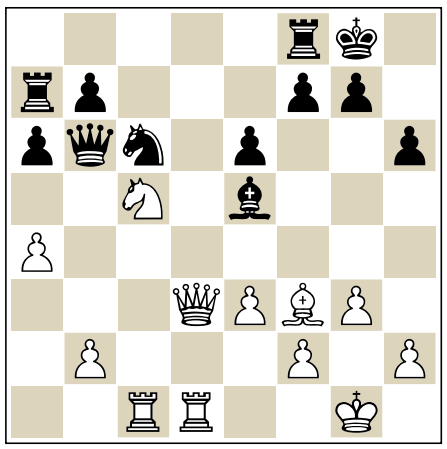
NEW IN CHESS

The fifth and last NH Tournament ended with a festive dinner and musical entertainment in the St. Olof Chapel of the NH Barbizon Hotel.

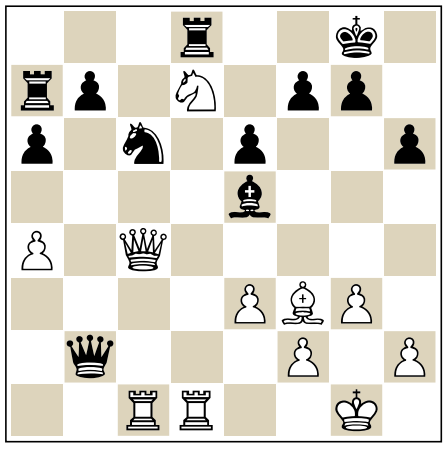
too hard to find the following sequence: 18.a5 ♕b4 19.♕e3 b6! (19...♖a8 20.♖a3!) 20.axb6 ♖d7 21.♕c5 ♕b3!, and since my computer says it's equal, it's equal.

18.e3 ♗e5 19.♖ac1 ♘c6 20.♘xc5

Here I already fully realized how bad it all was, but it still took me a lot of time to actually find a way to more or less hold the position.



20...♖d8! 21.♘d7 ♕xb2! The only move. 21...♕c7 would lose to 22.b4! **22.♕c4?** After 22.♔g2! the saving move was 22...♕a2!, covering the key c4-square: 23.♕e4 ♗c7 24.♕h4, and White keeps an edge, but Black is still in the game.



22...b5??

The point was that after 22.♕c4 I briefly thought that I was in trouble. However, the way my opponent made his move and his expression at that point clearly showed me that there was some equalizer in the position.

So I 'found' it, and immediately played it. If I had thought for half a minute more, who knows, maybe my plans for March 2011 would have been different... ☺

22...♖xd7 is not that hard to find: 23.♖xd7 b5 24.♕xc6 ♖xd7, but if you don't see the problem with 22...b5, then why try to find it?

23.axb5

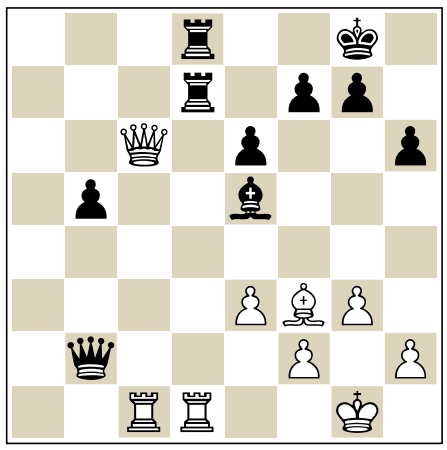
My opponent played this move too quickly. I already felt something was wrong, but I couldn't stop my hand from replying:

23...axb5?

After seeing 25.♕xd7! I realized that it was actually here that I had missed my last chance to save the game and the tournament.

Correct was 23...♖axd7! 24.♖xd7 ♖xd7 25.bxc6 ♖d8!, and I actually think that it would be a draw!!: 26.♗e4 (26.c7? ♖c8) 26...♗c7, and I don't see how White is going to break the fortress, although he can try for a while, of course.

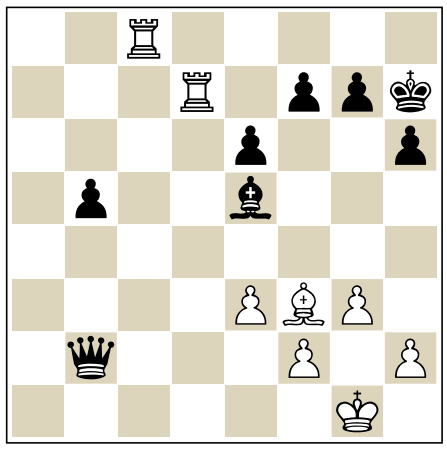
24.♕xc6 ♖axd7



25.♕xd7!

It's similar to the famous game in which Karpov blundered against Kasparov. Hopefully, this blunder will not be the only similarity between me and Karpov ☺.

25...♖xd7 26.♖c8+ ♔h7 27.♖xd7



Now it's all over.

27...♔g6 Or 27...f5 28.♗h5. **28.h4 ♕a3 29.♔g2 ♔f6 30.♖b7 ♕d6 31.♖a8 b4 32.♖aa7 ♕f8 33.h5 ♗d6 34.♖d7 ♗e5 35.♖ab7 ♕e8 36.♗d1 ♗c3 37.♗b3 ♗d2 38.♔f1 ♗c3 39.♔e2 ♕g8 40.♗c2 ♕e8 41.f4 g5 42.hxg6 fxg6 43.e4 g5 44.e5+ ♗xe5 45.♖f7+ ♕xf7 46.fxe5+ ♔g7 47.♖xf7+ ♔xf7 48.g4 ♔g7 49.♔f3 ♔f7 50.♗b3 ♔e7 51.♔e4 ♔f7 52.♗d1 ♔g7 53.♔d4 ♔g6 54.♔c4 h5 55.gxh5+ ♔f5 56.h6 ♔g6 57.♗g4** Black resigned.

So after another disaster I had to play Nakamura in a tiebreak. I guess my chances in a blitz tiebreak would have been pretty slim even against someone that Nakamura beats easily (as he said himself: 'And that includes Magnus' ☺). So the 2-0 wasn't a big shock for me, although I must say that I was surprised by the poor play my opponent showed in Game 1 (I must also admit that I wasn't too surprised with my own poor play either ☺).

The blitz tiebreak put an end to the fairy-tale. To me, what had happened in the last two rounds seemed like a miracle. Hopefully, next time when such a miracle happens I will be on the other side, the winning side...

NOTES BY

Hikaru Nakamura

QP 9.3 – D00

Hikaru Nakamura

Anish Giri

Amsterdam (playoff blitz-1) 2010

This first playoff blitz game was incredibly important, as I picked white in the drawing of colors. Generally speaking, in any blitz/rapid match it is especially important to try and apply as much pressure as possible early on.

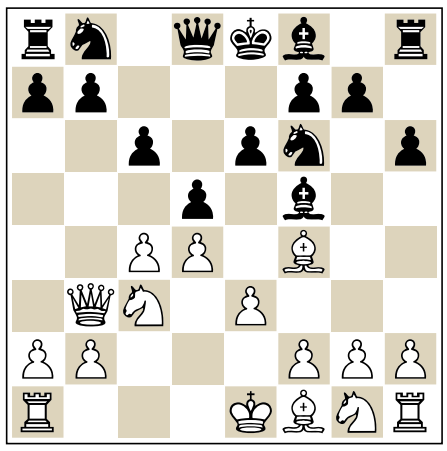
1.d4 d5 2.♗g5!?

NEW IN CHESS

Anish Giri's worst dream has come true. He has to fight for the Amber ticket in a blitz play-off against Hikaru Nakamura. True to his reputation the American was merciless and won 2-0.

This surprised Anish considerably. It was clear that he and his second, GM Chuchelov, had prepared for the blitz games while Svidler had been taking forever to beat David Howell in a long endgame.

2...c6 3.e3 h6 4.♗f4 ♗f5 5.c4 e6 6.♘c3 ♘f6 7.♕b3

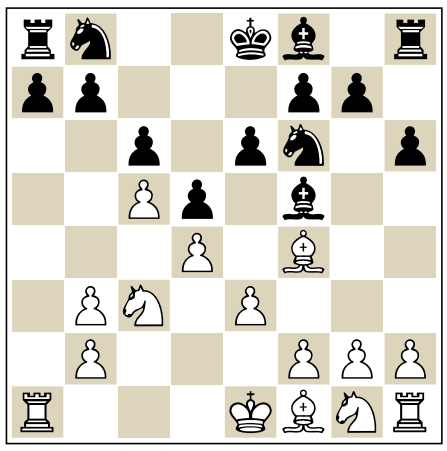


7...♕b6?

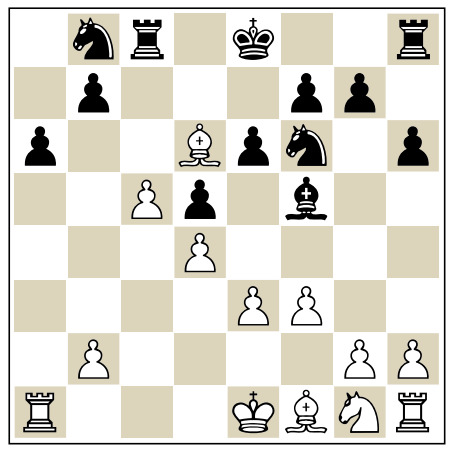
Anish played this move quickly. Although Black is alright in the resulting queenless middlegame, it is very difficult to play from a practical point of view.

Better seems 7...♕c8 8.♖c1 ♗e7 9.♘f3 (or 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 – and not 9...exd5? 10.♘b5! ♘a6 11.♘d6+ ♗xd6 12.♗xd6, when White is almost winning – 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.♘f3 0-0, with a completely equal position in which Black has no problems) 9...0-0, with a normal middlegame where piece-play will determine the end result.

8.c5 ♕xb3 9.axb3



9...a6? Another serious error, but the correct solution to the problem is almost impossible to calculate in a blitz game: 9...♘bd7 10.b4 g5 11.♗g3 a6 12.b5 cxb5 13.♘xb5 ♖c8!, and amazingly Black is holding all the glue together despite the optical illusion that the position is suspect. **10.b4 ♘h5 11.♗c7 ♘d7 12.b5 cxb5 13.♘xb5 ♖c8 14.♘d6+ ♗xd6 15.♗xd6 ♘hf6 16.f3 ♘b8**

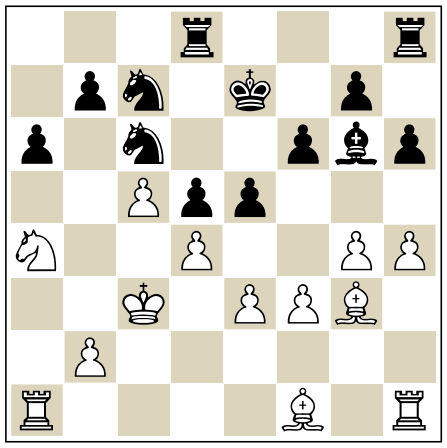


17.♘e2?!

The first in a string of mistakes which ruins a big middlegame advantage.

After 17.b4! ♔d7 18.b5 White is practically winning, due to the inevitable queenside pressure. I had simply overestimated the ideas with ♘c3-a4-b6.

17...♔d7 18.♘c3 ♘e8 19.♗f4 ♘c6 20.♘a4 ♔e7 21.♔d2 f6 22.g4 ♗g6 23.♔c3 e5 24.♗g3 ♘c7 25.h4 ♖cd8

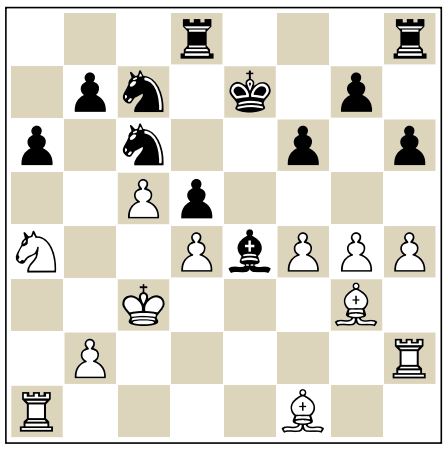


26.f4?

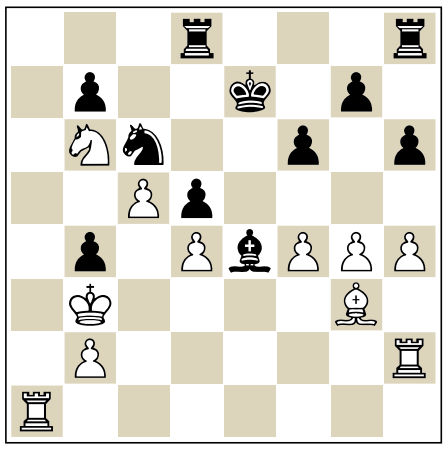
A huge mistake! I had overlooked the following variation.

After 26.h5 ♗h7 27.♘b6 I still maintain a small advantage, but there is no direct breakthrough, and Black can put pressure on d4.

26...♗e4 27.♖h2 exd4+ 28.exd4



28...♘b5+! A nice tactic by Anish. **29.♗xb5 axb5 30.♘b6 b4+ 31.♔b3**



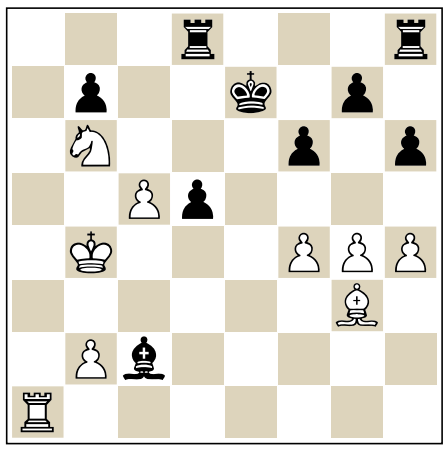
31...♘xd4+?

After the unusual move 31...♗f3 I am significantly worse, as g4 is falling and the d4 pawn is a permanent weakness.

32.♔xb4 ♘c2+?

After 32...♘c6+ 33.♔c3 d4+ 34.♔d2 f5 a roughly equal position arises, with chances for both sides. Certainly a better choice than the game.

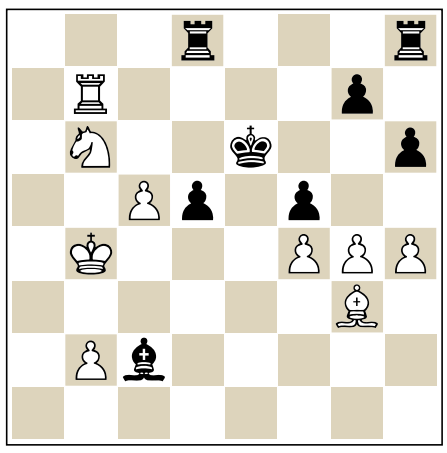
33.♖xc2 ♗xc2



34.♖a7! f5

The only move. After 34...d4 35.♖xb7+ ♔e8 36.♗e1 the passed c-pawn and the lack of coordination doom Black's position.

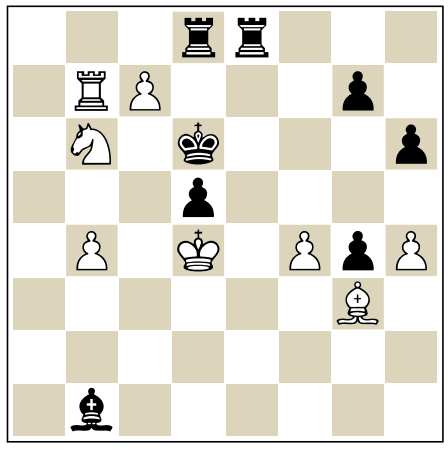
35.♖xb7+ ♔e6



36.♔c3!

A very good move which makes the defense a lot more difficult for Black while killing the obvious counterplay with d4-d3-d2-d1.

36...♗b1 37.♔d4 fxg4 38.b4 ♖he8 39.c6 ♔d6 40.c7



Here, Anish had about eight seconds but ended up flagging. Nevertheless, the position is still incredibly unpleasant even if he finds the correct defense. Having won this first game, I knew that the second one would be a lot easier, as Anish probably would have trouble psychologically recovering after getting a better position in the middlegame.

In the final position, after 40...♔c6 41.cxd8♕ ♖xd8 42.♖xg7 ♔xb6 43.♖f7! ♖a8 44.f5 ♖a3 45.♗f4 the computer engines could possibly find a miracle draw, but for a human it should be relatively easy to convert.

Amsterdam 2010

Rising Stars				6	7	8	9	10	
1 Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2729	0 ½	½ 0	1 ½	1 ½	1 1	6
2 Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2672	½ ½	½ ½	1 0	½ 1	½ 1	6
3 David Caruana	IGM	ITA	2672	0 ½	1 ½	1 ½	½ 0	½ ½	5
4 David Howell	IGM	ENG	2616	0 0	½ 0	1 0	1 ½	½ 1	4½
5 Wesley So	IGM	PHI	2674	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ 0	4½
			(2672)						26

Experience				1	2	3	4	5	
6 Boris Gelfand	IGM	ISR	2739	1 ½	½ ½	1 ½	1 1	½ ½	7
7 Peter Svidler	IGM	RUS	2734	½ 1	½ ½	0 ½	½ 1	½ ½	5½
8 Peter Heine Nielsen	IGM	DEN	2700	0 ½	0 1	0 ½	0 1	½ ½	4
9 Loek van Wely	IGM	NED	2677	0 ½	½ 0	½ 1	0 ½	½ ½	4
10 Ljubomir Ljubojevic	IGM	SRB	2572	0 0	½ 0	½ ½	½ 0	½ 1	3½
			(2684)						24

ROWSON'S REVIEWS

A Fine Bromance

Most hardened chess players are no strangers to male friendship, mainly because the alternative would be abject loneliness. Various social theorists have suggested that the bond between male friends is somehow different, and more intense than female friendship, and they might be right.

It is certainly true that popular culture seems to present us with more examples of close male partnerships, though Cagney and Lacey – remember them? – immediately come to mind as a counter example. But think of Brad Pitt and George Clooney in the *Ocean* movies, Matt Damon and Ben Affleck in *Good Will Hunting*, Kirk and Spock in *Star Trek*, and if anybody is reading in India, Veeru and Jai on the same motorcycle in *Sholay*, singing to each other about what good friends they are.

These partnerships are homosocial, rather than homosexual – they are nothing to do with being Gay. As Classicist Robert Hübner might put it, or perhaps Nigel Short when he feels like conveying his Greek acumen, they are about *Philia* rather than *Eros*. However, sometimes you could be forgiven for conflating the two, and in recent years I have noticed a new term, 'brotherly romance', usually abbreviated to 'bromance'.

Bromances are characterized by a deep, sometimes tempestuous connection in which two men feel that they in some sense belong together, and that their destinies are intertwined. I have a close friend whom I have now known for more than half my life. We speak on the phone at least every week, and he is a major presence in my life. I have other friends, but this one is a bit different, because it feels as much like a 'relationship' as a friendship, with mutual obligations. Those who enjoy the American sitcom 'Seinfeld', will recognize this tension in the scene where George and Jerry negotiate 'the airport pick up', with neither of them being sure that their friendship is ready for that sort of commitment.

I don't know Topalov or Danailov, but I always felt they had some sort of bromance going on. I would say Spassky and Fischer had a fledgling bromance at some point, but it never fully blossomed, perhaps because Fischer lacked the emotional capacity, reflected in his comment, when asked whether he wanted Spassky in his jail cell in Japan, that he would much rather have 'a chick'.

This contrasts nicely with Karpov's decision to visit Kasparov in jail. He clearly missed him, and wanted to let him know that he wasn't alone. More recently, we have watched Kasparov follow Karpov around the world, and there can be no doubt that their bromance is in full bloom.

I guess it's no surprise when you think about it. They have been in each other's thoughts for decades. They have shared intense experience and precious memories. They have travelled together. Their minds have been intertwined in tempestuous combat for hours on end. They both know 'what it is like'. They have played on the same team. They have common friends and common enemies. They are both fathers. They both miss being in the limelight. They shared a common cause. And in the light of the recent FIDE election, they are united in despair.

Kasparov's relationship to Karpov cannot be characterized as a friendship. Even to say that they are 'on good terms' doesn't capture the depth of feeling they must have for each other. They defined each other as players, and personalities.

And yet, they are of course very different. I have on my desk three impressive volumes of the Kasparov-Karpov matches, 1975-1985, 1986-87 and 1988-2009. They are all excellent, obviously, and I would love to be momentarily released from my current responsibilities so that I could read all of them, and reconnect with the games that defined my generation of players. I have this idea that one day I will get time to really study chess deeply again, and may start by going through the whole series of recent Kasparov books. I suspect I would learn a lot that could quickly be applied in practice, as I had previously discovered from looking at the games.

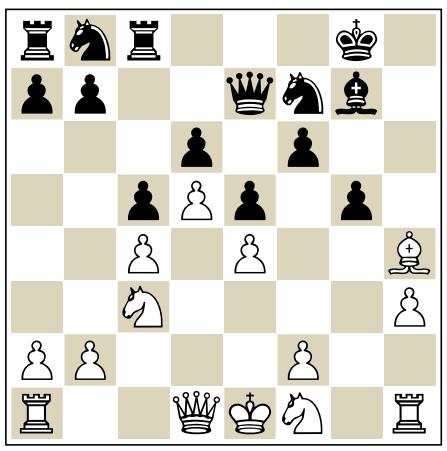
My view of Kasparov and his books is that you just have to try to read them. He is too 'big' a figure, not to. Whatever the faults or limi-

NEW IN CHESS

Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov speaking with one voice on the eve of the FIDE presidential elections in Khanty-Mansiysk.

tations of the text or analysis, you cannot help but learn, and some positions and decisions make a lasting impression.

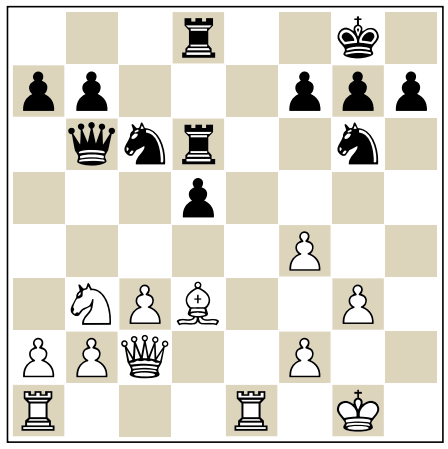
For instance, in the days before computers got in the way, my first major chess coach, Donald Holmes, taught me the value of playing through games of such great players, simply to acquire patterns and infer principles that one may use in different contexts. I was somewhat skeptical, as any callow youth would be, and like all misguided chess players wanting to study openings and play blitz. However, I knew I was on to a good thing after seeing the following game gradually unfold on a wooden board, one manual move at a time.



Kasparov-Chiburdanidze
Baku 1980

A poorly camouflaged King's Indian. If White plays the obvious 17.♗g3, Black plays 17...f5 and the position is unstable. Instead, Kasparov casually sacrifices a bishop.
17.♘e3!! gxh4 18.♘f5 Kasparov often lands a knight on this square, and I believe he once said that this achievement was worth a pawn. In this case he has given more, but Black has no counterplay, and no space to make her extra piece do anything useful. I was particularly struck by the patient manoeuvering of the king in what follows, suggesting he felt no anxiety at all about being a piece down. **18...♕d8 19.♕g4 ♘g5 20.♘xh4 ♖c7 21.♘f5 a6 22.h4 ♘h7 23.♖g1 ♕f8 24.♔e2 ♖a7 25.a4 b6 26.♕h5 ♔h8 27.♖g6 ♖d7 28.♖ag1 ♖ab7 29.♕g4 ♖bc7 30.♖g2 ♖b7 31.♔f1 ♖a7 32.♔g1 ♖f7 33.♘e2 ♕c8 34.f4 b5 35.axb5 axb5 36.cxb5 ♖ab7 37.h5 ♘f8 38.♕h3 ♘xg6 39.hxg6+ ♔g8 40.gxf7+** Black resigned.

Perhaps I can learn a few things from this guy after all, I thought, and a little later I had a similar experience with Karpov, when I tried to guess White's move in the following position:



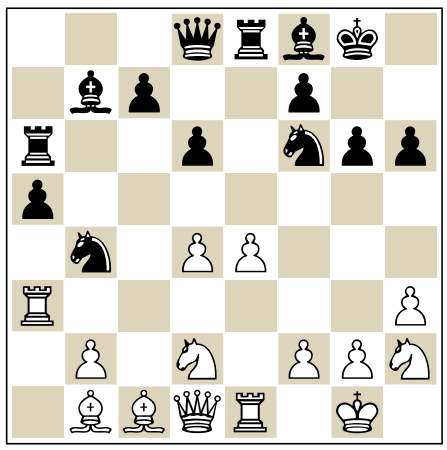
Karpov-Kuzmin
Leningrad 1973

20.a3!
Which is obvious, when you think about it, because we simply need to be ready for Black to play ...d4, which can now be met with c4 without allowing ♘b4. The trouble is that few of us think in this way, and most would have chosen a more active move like ♔g2 planning ♖h1, and then entered crisis management mode when Black played d4, releasing all the latent energy in his position.

In his Predecessor book on Karpov, Kasparov quotes Karpov as saying: 'The effect of this quiet move is equivalent to a thunder clap. Black finally loses any hope of playing d5-d4 and is left without counterplay. Whereas White's plan is clear: he will transfer his knight to f3, double his rooks on the e-file, and then, according to circumstances, advance his f-pawn and his queenside pawns.'
So much from such a tiny little move – 20.a3! – Such was Karpov's power.
20...h5 21.♔g2 h4 22.♖e2! ♘f8 23.♘d2 ♖h6 24.♘f3 hxg3 25.fxg3 ♘d7 26.♖ae1 ♔f8 27.g4 ♕c7 28.g5 ♖h8 29.♔g3 ♘c5 30.♗f5 g6 31.b4 ♘e4+ 32.♗xe4 dxe4 33.♕xe4 ♔g7 34.b5 ♘a5 35.♕e7 ♕xe7 36.♖xe7 ♖d3 37.♖c7 ♘b3 38.♔g4 ♖f8 39.♖ee7 Black resigned.

While the matches between the two K's were often portrayed as 'fire meets ice', 'tactics meet strat-

egy' and so on, in fact both players competed with a variety of different ploys. Kasparov was capable of moves that were similar in spirit to 20.a3! above. The following decision made a particularly strong visual impression.



Kasparov-Karpov
New York 1990 (2)

19.f3!

Before proceeding, it has to be said that this move looks decidedly odd. White cuts his rook off from the kingside, takes away an important square from both knights, creates a weakness on g3 and exposes his king. What makes the move so powerful is that on

Garry Kasparov
On Modern Chess Part Four
Kasparov vs Karpov 1988-2009

balance it takes even more energy out of Black's position, which revolved around the e4-square.

'Finally I had the good fortune to employ a novelty, which had awaited its hour since the first match (1984/85). The idea of f2-f3 in such positions was suggested at the time by Timoschenko. And this idea, when put into effect, made a strong impression on the experts in the press centre and the numerous commentators on the match! Razuvaev: 'White strongly supports his central e4 pawn, and three black pieces – rook on e8, knight on f6 and bishop on b7 – are left without work.' This also applies to the rook on a6: in view of its intentions, my strictly prophylactic move proves simply ideal.

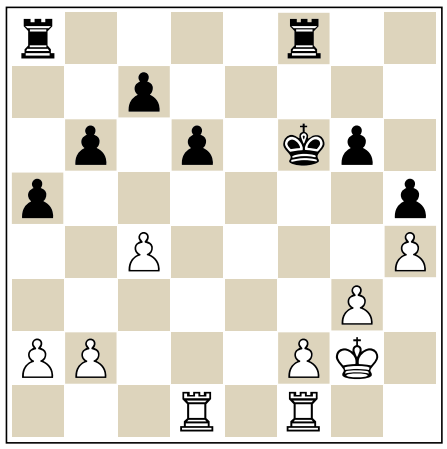
'Judging by Karpov's reaction, the modest 19.f3 came as an unpleasant surprise, and he began experiencing discomfort. This was a rare occurrence in our games, when with the first unexplored move I was able to set my opponent serious problems. It is not surprising that after this game the variation almost disappeared from tournament play (although, as we will see now, the situation is still far from clear).'

19...♕d7

Apparently both 19...d5 and 19...c5 were better.

20.♘c4 ♕b5 21.♖c3 ♗c8 22.♗e3 ♔h7 23.♕c1 c6 24.♘g4 ♘g8 25.♗xh6! ♗xh6 26.♘xh6 ♘xh6 27.♘xd6 ♕b6 28.♘xe8 ♕xd4+ 29.♔h1 ♕d8 30.♖d1 ♕xe8 31.♕g5 ♖a7 32.♖d8 ♕e6 33.f4 ♗a6 34.f5 ♕e7 35.♕d2 ♕e5 36.♕f2 ♕e7 37.♕d4 ♘g8 38.e5 ♘d5 39.fxg6+ fxg6 40.♖xc6 ♕xd8 41.♕xa7+ ♘de7 42.♖xa6 ♕d1+ 43.♕g1 ♕d2 44.♕f1

Black resigned.



Kasparov-Karpov
Leningrad 1986 (24)

A rather dull position to remember, but Kasparov had to draw this position with White to win the World Championship match. In this respect, I was impressed by the following simple, but resolute decision:

23.a4!

'A stabilizing move which is very important positionally, since otherwise Black will play a5-a4 and the white queenside pawns will become vulnerable.'

White went on to draw comfortably. This move made a big impression on me. It is resolutely boring, which is precisely its strength. In this move you can feel Kasparov's respect for his rival, and an awareness of his own fallibility. Once that black pawn lands on a4, goodness knows what Karpov might do to you.

Coming back to their current bromance, judging by these 'Modern Chess' books by Kasparov, it began in a simultaneous game in 1975, where Karpov won from a dodgy position, and the young Garry was terribly upset. 'Who could then have imagined,' asks Kasparov, 'that years later, over a period of six years, we would have to play a hundred and fifty games against each other and spend more than 600 hours at the board?'

So while their first encounter left a mark, the genesis of their bromance must surely be those 600 hours over the board, experience in a series of world championship matches in several cities. First they shared many mysterious Moscow moments in 1984-85; then mutual lingering in London, and longing in Leningrad, in 1986; followed by surprises and shenanigans in Seville in 1987, nervy yearnings in New York and pouting pugilism in Lyon in 1990. No wonder they feel attached.

They are unlikely to play again, so perhaps we are now witnessing the twilight of their mutual regard, or could this be an ever deepening bromance?

HANS REE

A Ravaged World

Young Najdorf by Tomasz Lissowski, a small companion to the author's earlier book *Najdorf: Life and Games*, reconstructs Najdorf's early career and Polish chess during the interbellum.

My database is ChessBase's Mega Database 2009, supplemented by the weekly gamefiles from *The Week in Chess*. As I write these lines, it contains 4,321,654 games and by the time I have finished this article it will have grown with thousands of games from the Olympiad.

Its halfway point is somewhere in the year 2000, which suggests that in the last 10 years just as many games worth saving have been played as in the centuries before that point, a statement that has a kernel of truth, although it is an exaggeration.

I am not at all suggesting that for the sake of a fair balance modern games of low quality should be pruned from the databases, but the historical part can certainly be improved upon.

The first game by Najdorf in my base is a consultation game against Alekhine played in Warsaw in 1935, when Najdorf, born in 1910, had already at least seven years of Polish tournament chess behind him. From 1935 on the database does a better job with Najdorf, although some interesting events are left out, for instance a five-game match against Savielly Tartakower in 1935 which Najdorf won by 3-2 (+2 =2 –1).

In *Young Najdorf* two of these games are given with notes from the *Wiener Schachzeitung*, an easily obtainable source. Two other games are taken from Polish sources and one game is still missing.

It was only a friendly match, played when Tartakower ('my teacher' as Najdorf called him) was visiting Najdorf in Torun, where he did his military service. Still, it was a match between two legendary players.

Also missing are Najdorf's games from the international championship of Yugoslavia, a strong tournament held in Rogaska Slatina in 1937 and won by Najdorf.

I call it a strong tournament because Foltys, Pirc and Sämisch were also taking part, but 'strong' is a relative concept and in the *Oxford Companion to Chess* by Hooper and Whyld I read that Najdorf never won a strong tournament in his life. This is really a severe judgement. What about Amsterdam 1950, with Reshevsky, Euwe, Stahlberg and Gligoric, or Havana 1962, with Polugaevsky, Spassky, Gligoric and Smyslov? Were they not strong? The *Companion* mentions those fine tournament victories by Najdorf, but apparently takes the strict view that a tournament should only be called strong if all participants are top class.

A Scholarly Thief

Young Najdorf is a companion to an earlier book by Lissowski, *Najdorf: Life and Games*, about which I wrote in New In Chess 2005/5. The biographical section of that book already had much information about Najdorf's early years, but understandably the game collection concentrated mainly on the later period, when he was recognized as one of the strongest players outside the Soviet Union.

This new and much smaller book has 192 games, from Najdorf's earliest years up to a tournament in Buenos Aires that was held immediately after the 1939 Olympiad. My database has 130 games of the same period. Most of the additional games have been published before, but often in sources that are hard to come by. Anyway, hurrah for books!

In an introduction, Lissowski pays tribute to two Polish chess players who have collected many game scores and annotations, Dawid Daniuszewski and Zygmunt Lokuciewski. Daniuszewski (1885?-1944?, the question marks are by Lissowski in another publication) wrote two books that contain many games played in the Polish city of Lodz, and over many years he worked on a manu-

script that is said to contain thousands of games.

Alas, this manuscript is not available to researchers. Lissowski writes: 'This manuscript came into the hands of Lothar Schmid, long after its author's death, but it was stolen from his car and has never been seen again. This manuscript was probably the only record of many early twentieth century Polish games.' A valuable collector's item indeed.

Having read the interview with the American collector David DeLucia in New In Chess 2010/5, in which Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam mentions 'Lothar Schmid's notorious collecting practices and his tricks to obtain books at all cost', I wondered what really happened with the Polish manuscript. 'Came into the hands of Lothar Schmid'... That doesn't suggest that he had bought it. And then it was stolen from his car and never seen again. Was it really stolen? We don't have the word of the thief for it.

Reconstructing a Vanished World

The disappearance of this manuscript was only one of Lissowski's many problems when he tried to reconstruct the first 29 years of the life of Moshe Mendel (or Mieczyslaw, the Polish way, or later Miguel) Najdorf. Many Polish archives were destroyed during World War II. Najdorf's family was murdered by the Germans. And later, when Najdorf talked or wrote about his Polish years, his information was often inaccurate or based on false memories.

Lissowski could not even be sure about the maiden name of Najdorf's mother. Najdorf himself gave the names Bernstein and Rosklein and according to his Argentine daughter Liliana in her book *Najdorf X Najdorf*, it was Sklarek.

And where did Najdorf live? He was born in Warsaw and went to school there. It seems that later he lived a few years in Lodz and returned to Warsaw in 1929, but Lissowski doesn't give (and probably doesn't have) details about his moves.

Lissowski is certainly right in not accepting everything Najdorf wrote as gospel, but I think I found an instance of him correcting Najdorf wrongly.

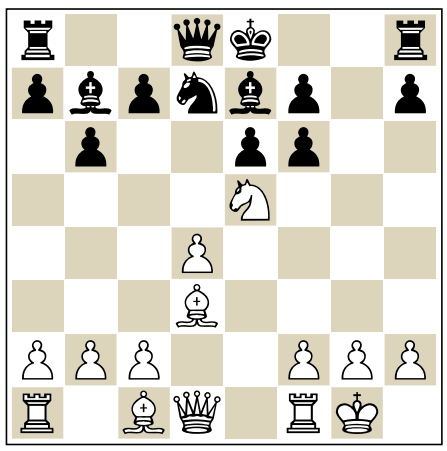
Najdorf-Gliksberg
Lodz 1929

Lissowski writes: 'Numerous sources wrongly give the loser's name as Szapiro, Shapiro or Schapiro. Gliksberg from Lodz should not be confused with the second category Warsaw player, Glücksberg.'

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘f3 ♗e7 6.♗d3 ♘gf6 7.0-0 b6 8.♘e5

This is the move that Najdorf gave in the 1970s, writing: 'A natural move within the powers of any amateur. White strikes at the weak squares. Black's reply is forced.' Lissowski, basing himself on the moves given by the Polish magazine *Szachy*, thinks that Najdorf remembered the move wrongly and that in fact 8.♘fg5 was played. I think that in this case Najdorf's memory was fine, one reason being that 8.♘e5 is indeed a very natural move.

8...♗b7 9.♘xf6+ gxf6



Another, even stronger reason why I think that White's knight is not on g5 is that in that case Najdorf could have finished the game at once with 10.♘xe6. He wouldn't have missed that.

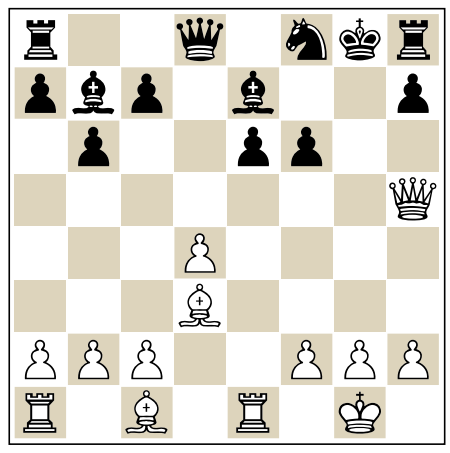
10.♘xf7 ♔xf7 11.♕h5+ ♔g8 12.♕g4+ ♔f7 13.♕h5+ ♔g8

The repetition of moves is as given by Najdorf, who wrote that he had repeated to see if Black would go wrong. But Lissowski, trusting his own source, thinks that the repetition didn't occur at all.

To me it seems more likely that a repetition that had actually occurred was left out in a magazine than that Najdorf invented one. Maybe, checking Najdorf's stories, Lissowski has become too sceptical about his hero's memory. It may not have been perfect, but other sources may also be wrong.

Here Najdorf didn't want to play 14.♗h6 because of 14...♗f8, although White would be fine after 15.♗c4.

14.♖e1 ♘f8



15.♖xe6

A beautiful way to continue the attack.

15...♘xe6 16.♗c4 ♕d6 17.♗h6 ♗f8

Najdorf wrote that this move was forced, but my computer finds 17...♖d8, in order to protect his knight by ♗d5, a better defence. I couldn't find more than a perpetual for White.

18.♖e1 ♗c8 19.♕e8

Now Black is lost.

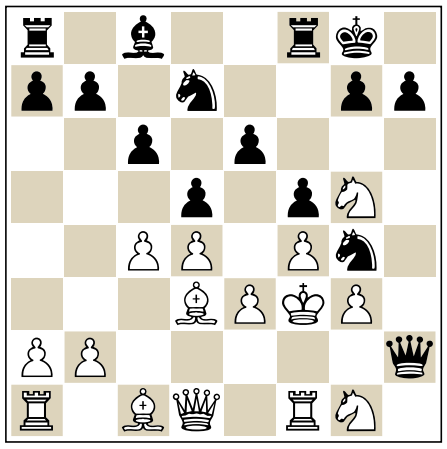
19...♗d7 20.♖xe6 ♖xe8 21.♖xe8+ ♗e6 22.♗xe6+ ♕xe6 23.♖xf8 Mate.

The Polish Immortal

Lissowski warns us not to confuse Gliksberg with Glücksberg. But of course the two have been confused. Here is Najdorf's most famous game from his early years, in which he sacrificed four pieces. It was called 'The Polish Immortal' in the *Wiener Schachzeitung* in 1935 by Savielly Tartakower, who indicated wrongly that it had been played in 1935. It had, in fact, been played during a tournament in Warsaw in 1929/1930, either as a free game or in the B-tournament. Lissowski isn't sure.

Glücksberg-Najdorf
Warsaw 1929 or 1930

1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e6 4.♘f3 d5 5.e3 c6 6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♘e2 ♘bd7 9.♘g5 ♗xh2+ 10.♔h1 ♘g4 11.f4 ♕e8 12.g3 ♕h5 13.♔g2 ♗g1 14.♘xg1 ♕h2+ 15.♔f3



15...e5 16.dxe5 ♘dxe5+ 17.fxe5 ♘xe5+ 18.♔f4 ♘g6+ 19.♔f3 f4 20.exf4 ♗g4+ 21.♔xg4 ♘e5+ 22.fxe5 h5 Mate.

Talking about confusing names. Glücksberg is sometimes spelled without the umlaut on the u. Well, small matter. Sometimes the initial of his first name is given as B., but Lissowski doesn't do so, indicating that he isn't sure of the first name. The Polish *Kurjer Warszawski* in 1930 gave the name of the loser of this game as Gliksberg. Liliana Najdorf gives it as Ignacio Gliksberg and dates the game to 1928, but a few pages later she gives it as Gluksberg. I don't have her book, but I trust Edward Winter, who quoted her.

Finally, Kasparov, in *My Great Predessors* Part IV, writes that he bases himself on the words of Najdorf himself and his daughter Liliana, but has a spelling all of his own, I. Glinksberg.

Alekhine's Cat

In 1935 Najdorf finished second in the Polish Championship, which was won by Savielly Tartakower. By the caprices of history Tartakower had become a Polish citizen, although he didn't speak Polish, had no special connection with Poland and had been living in Paris since 1924. But he dutifully played the cards that history had dealt him, playing for Poland in Olympiads, taking part in Polish tournaments and acting as a coach and teacher.

History has been harsh in Europe during the first half of the 20th century. Earlier I mentioned Dawid Daniuszewski and Zygmunt Lokuciewski, collectors of games played in Poland. Daniuszewski died during World War II in the ghetto of Lodz, where Jews were rounded up by the Germans to be killed.

Lokuciewski, born in Vilnius in 1922, was 'repatriated' to Poland in 1945. Repatriation, the euphemism used at the time, seems a strange word when someone is forced to leave his home town. After World War II Poland was moved westward, gaining German territory in the West and losing territory in the East to the Soviet Union. Many Poles followed the shift, trying to catch up with their country, and many died during this repatriation. Lokuciewski survived.

Later in 1935 Najdorf played his first Olympiad, held in Warsaw. In an earlier article I have pointed out how strong Poland was at the Olympiads during the interbellum. Poland won gold once, silver three times and bronze three times. At first Rubinstein and Tartakower were the strongmen of the team, later Tartakower and Najdorf. Paulin Frydman, now almost forgotten, was also very good.

In 1935 Poland came third, behind the USA and Sweden. Najdorf, on third board, had a fine score, +9 =6 –2.

A typical Najdorf incident. In his game against the Argentine player Isaias Pleci, Najdorf, after having made the time-control on the 36th move in a drawish position, forgot to press his clock and went walking around the tournament room. After a few minutes his flag fell and Pleci claimed the point. Najdorf filed a protest, but the appeal jury gave the point to Pleci, which nowadays would be self-evident.

The interesting part of this story is that several experts, including the venerable Jacques Mieses, strongly criticized this decision as being too formalistic. These were gentlemen, a breed now extinct, and they may have thought that Pleci had the moral duty to press Najdorf's clock himself. I don't know if the final position was really drawish, as the game score seems to have been lost.

On the fine website *OlimpBase* I found an anecdote connected with this Olympiad. I cannot vouch for the truth, of course. While Alekhine was playing his games, his beloved Persian cat named Chess was cared for by his wife, who unfortunately let it escape in the streets of Warsaw. Disaster. The great Alekhine wouldn't be able to play anymore. The terrible news was announced on Polish radio and in the press, with a fortunate result. It turned out that a newsboy had caught Chess and sold it to a passer-by who, after hearing

the news, turned up to return the cat to Alekhine, who gladly reimbursed the price paid for it, 20 zlotys or 5 dollars.

Robots and Fireworks

At the Nazi Olympiad in Munich in 1936, which was held outside FIDE, Najdorf played on second board behind Paulin Frydman and had a spendid score, +14 =4 –2. As in his earlier book on Najdorf, Lissowski quotes Najdorf's own words, written or spoken much later, when he recalled that at first he intended to boycott the Olympiad of the anti-Semites, but then was put under pressure by the president of the Polish chess federation Bronislaw Pilsudski, a brother of the famous Marshall Jozef Pilsudski, who implored him to do his duty for Poland. As with many Najdorf stories, this cannot be quite correct, as Jozef Pilsudski's brother Bronislaw, an anthropologist, had already died in 1918. And again Najdorf's recollection is quoted that he received his gold medal from the hands of Hans Frank, who would become known as the butcher of Poland. I still think that this was a false memory and that in fact Hans Frank was not present at the prize-giving ceremony.

This Olympiad was meant to be a tool of Nazi propaganda. The German tournament book by Kurt Richter and also a modern book about the political history of the Olympiads by Mario Tal, *Bruderküsse und Freudentränen* (brotherly kisses and tears of joy) make it clear that as a politically inspired spectacle, Munich 1936 looks uncannily modern.

Until then the Olympiads had been quiet affairs, by and for chess players, and for a long time afterwards they would still be so. But not in Munich. At the opening ceremony (where Hans Frank was indeed present) there were gigantic fireworks, watched by 20,000 people. Other festivities included a game with living pieces which portrayed the struggle between Occident and Orient – anticipating the modern concept of the 'Clash of Civilizations' – and a spectacle called 'Chess in the Year 2000'.

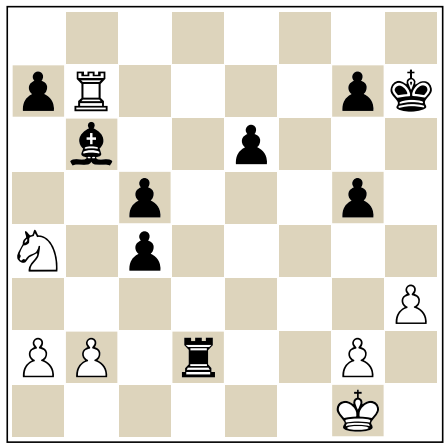
The tournament book says: 'With sirens screaming, two robotic men with burning eyes, spraying fire and enclosed by lightning and crashes, met at the iron chess set, accompanied by striding dances of 30 robotic girls with rhythmical songs.'

Not quite modern was the way they handled the transmission of the moves that were shown on the demonstration boards. This was done by microphone and loudspeaker, so that the thousands of chess tourists who had come from all over Germany in special trains to the Olympiad, could hear in the playing hall instructions shouted to the board boys such as: 'On board 1 White plays bishop Friedrich 1 to Bertha 5!'

The Olympiad was won by Hungary, ahead of Poland and Germany. A creditable result of the host country, that had been preparing the German team for this occasion for about a year. From a Nazi perspective Hungary's victory was politically correct, because that country was seen as an ideological ally. Poland's second place was less opportune, as there were several Jews in the team and the country was already on the list to become one of the first victims of Hitler's military aggression. Nevertheless, at the closing ceremony the successful Polish team received a generous applause.

Another Polish Immortal

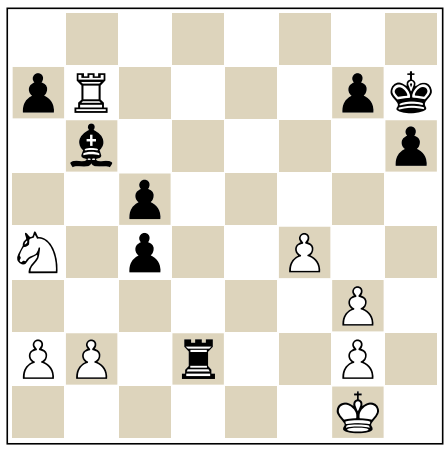
One of the Polish players was Antoni Wojchiechowski, who had played a part in one of the strangest coincidences ever known in chess.



This is the famous game Ortueta-Sanz, Madrid 1933, in which Black played the wonderful combination 31...♖xb2 32.♘xb2 c3 33.♖xb6 c4 34.♖b4 a5 35.♘xc4 c2, and White resigned.

Tigran Petrosian has said that when he saw this combination at the age of 10, he was so thrilled that it was one of the reasons that he was bound to chess forever.

Now look at this:



Tylkowski-Antoni Wojciechowski, Poznan 1931, two years earlier than the famous game by Sanz. The situation on the kingside is a bit different, but exactly the same combination was played: 30... ♖xb2 31.♘xb2 c3 32.♖xb6 c4 33.♖b4 a5 34.♘xc4 c2 35.♘xa5 c1♕+ 36.♔h2 ♕c5 37.♖b2 ♕xa5 38.g4 ♕e1 39.g3 h5 40.gxh5 ♔h6, and White resigned.

Was this game really played? On his website *Chess Curiosities* Tim Krabbé has a long article, 'Strangest Coincidence ever – or Hoax?' After checking all relevant sources and consulting with Polish experts, his conclusion

was that there is no reason at all to suppose that the Polish game is a fake. At the end he quotes the Spanish chess writer Pablo Moran, who suggested that it might be the Spanish game that was a fake. But Sanz will always be world-famous in our small world, whereas Wojciechowski is not.

Playing Well, Feeling Shattered

At the end of July 1939 about 80 European chess masters set sail from Antwerp to Buenos Aires on the Belgian steamer *Piriapolis*. The trip lasted more than three weeks. On the boat, Najdorf was the king of blitz games, although he couldn't take part in the most important blitz tournament because of sea-sickness. C.H.O'D Alexander was the king of table tennis.

During the Olympiad, just when the preliminary qualification competitions had finished, Poland was invaded by Germany; the beginning of World War II. The whole English team immediately went back home, a dangerous journey. Matches between countries that were involved in the war were cancelled and given a nominal result of 2-2.

Later Najdorf said to a journalist: 'Just as we were playing a match against the Dutch team, the ambassador of Poland entered the tournament hall and declared that German troops had seized Warsaw. I literally suffered a stroke. My position had been clearly won, though I was not able to think of anything but my family. I committed a blunder, losing a piece against Cortlever. It appeared that our team lacked merely one draw more for a golden medal.'

Although this story conveys a stark truth, it is not quite accurate. As Lissowski notes, the game against Cortlever was played during the first attack on Warsaw's military lines. The actual fall of Warsaw happened three weeks later, when the Olympiad had already finished. And Najdorf didn't blunder a piece in that game against Cortlever.

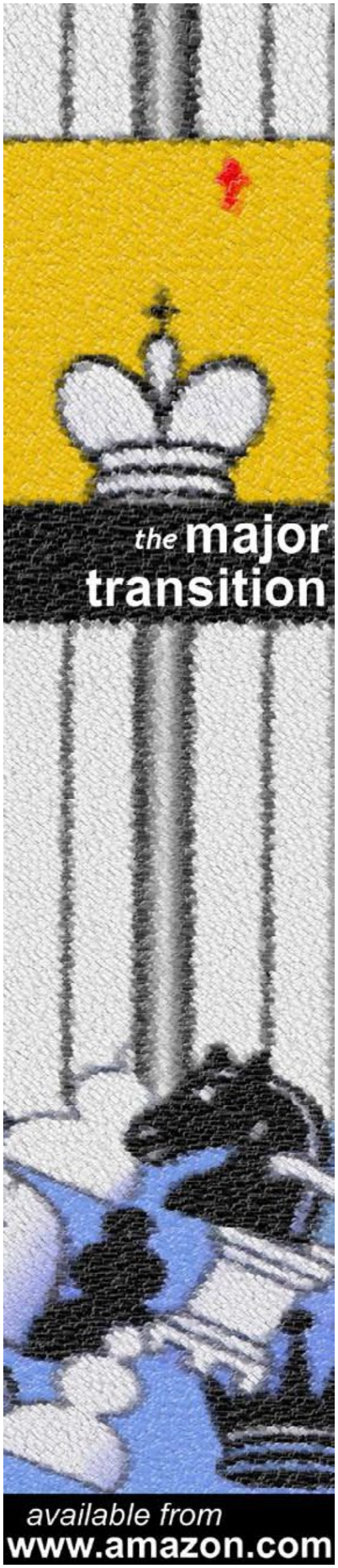
Of course many players, the Polish foremost, must have been shattered by the news. But strangely, their ability to play chess seemed almost unaffected by the events.

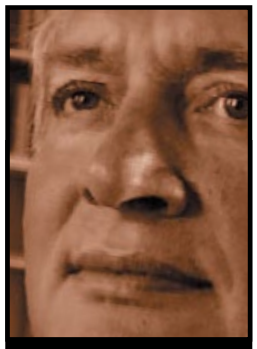
Najdorf scored +12 =4 –2 on second board. The Olympiad was won by Germany, which after the Anschluss of 1938 included Austria. Poland finished second, Estonia third. Estonia was not yet involved in the war, but it may have felt the shudders already. As a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, it would be invaded by the Soviet Union one year later.

After the Olympiad all German players decided to stay in Argentina. This was probably not because they disapproved of the German aggression. According to A.D. de Groot, who played for the Netherlands, Paul Michel was the only anti-Nazi among the German players, as a result of which he was always badgered by the other members of his team.

As for the Polish players, Najdorf and Frydman accepted invitations from Argentine Jews to stay there. The others, Tartakower, Regedzinski and Sulik, went back to the European war.

Tartakower would eventually serve with the Free French of general De Gaulle. Sulik, after spending some time in South America and the USA, ended up fighting for the Allies at the Italian front under the Polish general Wladyslaw Anders. Another caprice of history condemned Regedzinski to fight for the enemy. He reached Lodz in December 1939 and some years later was mobilized to fight at the Eastern front for the German Wehrmacht. He survived the war and died in Lodz in 1954.





JAN TIMMAN

Bent Larsen (1935-2010)

‘I’m going to win this tournament’

Two years ago, I was quite worried about Bent Larsen. In a none-too-strong tournament in Buenos Aires he lost all of his nine games. What’s more, the most worrying thing was that in most of his games he went against the rules of the strategic play he used to be such a past master of. I was relieved to read the long article at the occasion of his 75th birthday in New In Chess 2010/4. Larsen radiated peace; he seemed to be enjoying his old age and basking in the memories of his glory days.

So it came as quite a shock to read of his passing.

I have rarely met a more inspiring and original individual than Larsen. It was a privilege to have spent so much time with him, both on and off the board. I met him for the first time in Bonn in 1968, where we both gave simultaneous exhibitions, he against experienced club players, I against the juniors.

‘You have won all your games,’ he observed afterwards. I was a bit abashed by Larsen’s interest in my exhibition. He was one of my great examples.

Nine years later we played each other for the first time in Geneva. Larsen was living in Las Palmas at the time. He had come to the tournament by train and looked rather tired. This didn’t stop him from claiming tournament victory, however. In Geneva it struck me that Larsen played a long-winded kind of chess, always aiming for long manoeuvring games and waiting for his opponent to make slight mistakes. Our game contained a lot of manoeuvring, but neither of us could claim an advantage. At some stage Larsen offered me a draw, which I accepted.

In his In Memoriam in the *Huffington Post* Kavalek observes: ‘Offering him a draw was a waste of time.’ In other words, you could count on a polite refusal. Now in that time, premature draw offers were the order of the day, but in the games between Larsen and me these never happened. If one of us proposed a draw, the other invariably accepted it, for the simple reason that the position would really and truly be drawn.

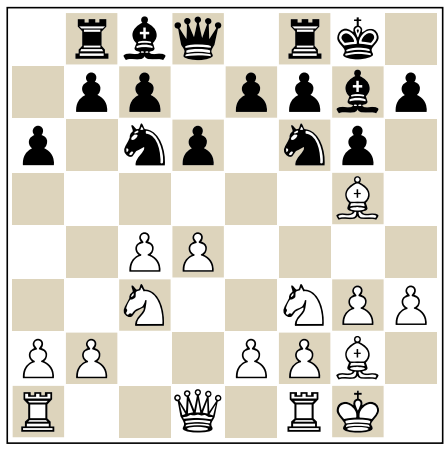
During the post-mortem I noticed that Larsen consulted his score sheet, not because his memory failed him, of course; he was in the habit of noting down the amount of time used for each move, which might also be of significance during the analysis.

Shortly after the Geneva tournament I played Larsen again in Las Palmas. The players were lodged in the stately Santa Catalina hotel. Larsen slept at home, but he did eat in the hotel. During our meals I got to know him better, which was an extraordinary experience for me. Larsen was someone with an almost encyclopedic knowledge of a variety of subjects. He also was an attentive reader of *Schaakbulletin*, the predecessor of this magazine. The language barrier was no problem to him; he had a good knowledge of Dutch, although he didn’t often speak it. Larsen revelled in the many local rumours and intrigues that were made much of in *Schaakbulletin*, and once asked me what exactly it was that Donner didn’t like in Böhm. I don’t remember exactly what I told him, but it met with his approval.

Karpov reigned supreme in Las Palmas, only conceding draws to Larsen, Tal and myself and winning the 12 remaining games. The fight for second place was between Larsen and myself. In Round 11 we played each other.

KI 70.3 – E63
Bent Larsen
Jan Timman
Las Palmas 1977

1.c4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 a6 8.h3 ♖b8 9.♗g5

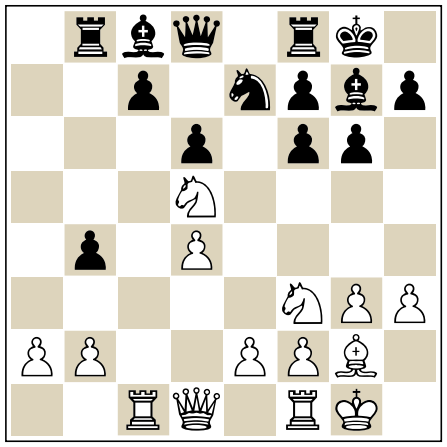


In my comments in *Schaakbulletin* I called this a novelty, but I was wrong. The text had already been played in Stahlberg-Szabo, Gothenburg 1955. Larsen prob-

ably knew that game. His opening preparation was usually not very deep, but he knew a great deal; this was because of his phenomenal memory, of course.

9...b5 The most common move is 9...h6. 9...♗g4, as played by Szabo, is also playable.

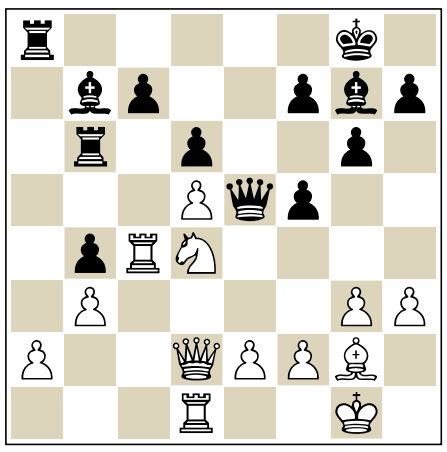
10.cxb5 axb5 11.♖c1 b4 12.♗xf6 exf6 13.♘d5 ♘e7



14.♘xe7+

The alternative is 14.♘xc7. Larsen probably thought there was too much chance of a draw after the forced 14...♖b7 15.♕c2 ♗f5 16.e4 ♗xe4 17.♕xe4 ♖xc7.

14...♕xe7 15.d5 f5 16.♘d4 ♖b6 17.♕d2 ♗b7 18.♖c4 ♕e5 19.♖d1 ♖a8 20.b3 Allowing a nice combination. The alternative was 20.e3, with roughly equal chances.



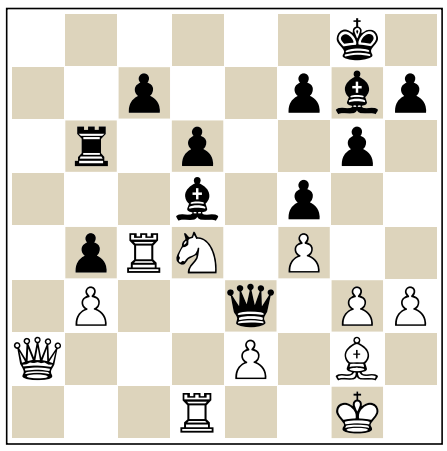
20...♗xd5 21.f4 ♖xa2!

The point of the previous move. White has to be careful now.

22.♕xa2

Larsen played this fairly fast, overlooking an important finesse. Correct was 22.♕c1. After 22...♕e8 23.♗xd5 ♗xd4+ 24.♖cxd4 ♕xe2 25.♖4d2 ♕e3+ the game will end in a draw, which means that with the text, Larsen was going for the win.

22...♕e3+



23.♔h2?

23.♔f1 was called for, when after 23...♗xc4 24.♕a8+ ♗f8 25.bxc4 ♕xg3 Black has the slightly better chances.

23...♕f2!

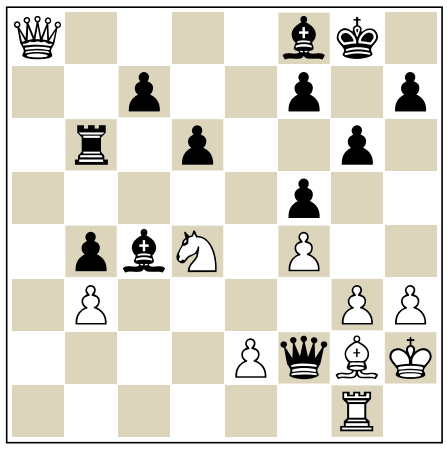
He had not seen this deadly zwischenzug. Now White will have to squirm quite a bit to prevent going under at once.

24.♖g1 One can imagine many a white player throwing in the towel here, but Larsen continued to fight unconcerned.

24...♗xc4

The alternative was 24...♗xd4, and after 25.♖cc1 ♗e4 26.♖cf1 ♕e3 Black rules supreme. During the post-mortem Larsen said that he had been planning to resign in that case. In reality, he wouldn't have, of course; even in that terrible position he would have looked for unexpected resources.

25.♕a8+ ♗f8



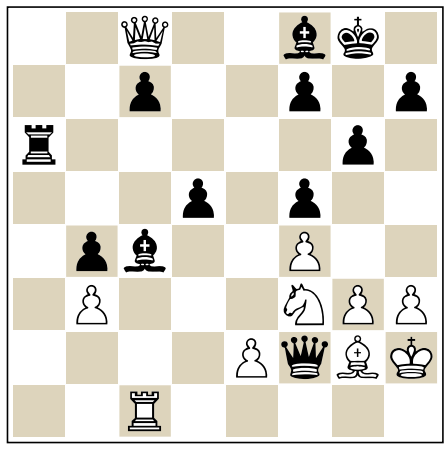
26.♖c1!

The only way to continue the fight.

26...d5 27.♘f3

The computer doesn't regard this as the strongest continuation, but practically speaking, it is White's best chance.

27...♖a6 28.♕c8



28...♗xe2?

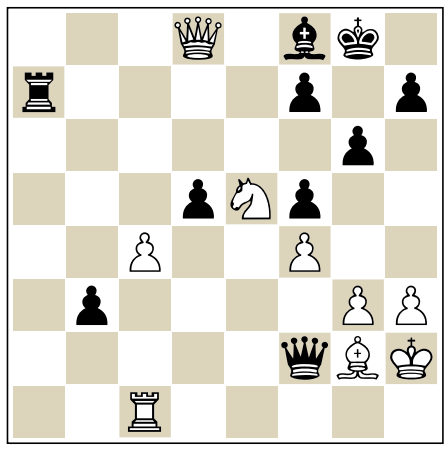
From here on in I lose the thread of the game. Winning was 28...♖a2, and after 29.bxc4 ♖xe2 30.♘h4 ♖e3 White's position collapses.

29.♘e5 ♖a2 30.♕xc7 ♖a7?

Annoyed by the missed win I lose my objectivity. With 30...♕a7 Black could have kept some advantage.

31.♕d8 From this point on Larsen steers the game to victory with an iron fist.

31...♗c4 32.bxc4 b3



33.c5! Sharply calculated.

33...b2 34.♖b1 ♕c2 35.♕b8 ♕xc5 36.♖xb2 ♖a1 37.h4 ♔g7 38.♕e8 ♖a7 39.♘c6 ♖a3 40.♖b7

Black resigned.

This wasn't exactly one of Larsen's best games, but it's a good illustration of his mental strength. For him, a game of chess was first and

foremost a strategic battle. If he overlooked a tactical turn, he was able to change tack: here he let go of strategy and with gusto threw himself into the upcoming tactical maelstrom.

By beating me, Larsen had virtually secured second place. During the prize-giving I asked him if it would be correct to congratulate him. In his customary decisive, yet friendly tone he replied: 'No, I don't like it. You can only congratulate me if I win a tournament.'

He was completely right. For someone with so many glorious tournament victories under his belt, second place was in some ways a defeat. The problem was that Karpov won almost every tournament in those days. In the end, Larsen managed to win a tournament ahead of Karpov before I did.

After Las Palmas I continued to find it hard to play against Larsen. In 1978 the second 'super-tournament' (after Tilburg '77) took place in the little Bosnian town of Bugojno. I had won my first two games. I was particularly pleased with my second-round game against Portisch, but it had been a long and tense fight. When I played Larsen as White in Round 3, I felt tired. I tried to play in a careful and orderly way, but this was playing straight into Larsen's hand. With subtle play and without clearly noticeable errors on my part, he managed to bend the game to his will.

That evening I was dining with two other participants when Larsen drew up a chair, saying: 'Today I am in a very good mood. I beat a strong grandmaster who made no mistakes.'

Politeness personified, but still I found my defeat hard to stomach.

Later that year, in Tilburg, I managed to beat Larsen for the first time. It had been, incidentally, a long time since Larsen had played a tournament in the Netherlands. According to Donner, this was because of Larsen's financial demands, which the organizers regarded as too stiff. From 1973 there had been an additional reason: a smouldering conflict between FIDE President Euwe and him. Larsen maintained that Euwe had guaranteed him that he would be assigned to the Interzonal tournament in Petropolis in Brazil. But it turned out that he had to play in Leningrad. Such a difficult qualification tournament in the Soviet Union was anything but fun for Western grandmasters. Larsen was furious with Euwe and vented his feelings in the newspapers whenever it suited him. During the Tilburg tournament he gave an interview to *Het Nieuwsblad van het Zuiden*, the biggest paper of the region. Larsen's scornful comments at the address of the FIDE President were highlighted in the headline. I have never seen that paper, incidentally. There was usually a big stack of them at the entrance to the playing hall and they were eagerly bought by the chess fans, who had shown up in great numbers. This time the table where the papers could normally be found was empty. It turned out that press officer Berry Withuis had bought the entire stack. Withuis told me about this remarkable transaction with a look of triumph on his face; he had wanted to protect Euwe.

It goes without saying that Euwe found out anyway. He tried to conciliate Larsen by writing him a letter. This was typical of Euwe. As a good diplomat he could take it on the chin, and he regarded it as his job to have good relations with the various top players. Euwe gave his letter to Martin Vael, one of the Tilburg organizers. Vael was going to the tournament in Montreal 1979, where he would give Larsen the letter. The reply wasn't long in coming. A few hours later Larsen returned Euwe's letter to Vael with a short, type-written answer. Everything was public, which is why I had access to both documents. Euwe's letter had been written in German. His opening sentence was: 'We are both respectable men.' Then he went on to say that he could have replaced Larsen with Hort. In Larsen's brief reply, under the hardly respectful salutation of 'Euwe', he justifiedly observed that Hort would not exactly have been happy with this solution to the problem.

I must say I pitied Euwe. As President of FIDE, he was often caught between a rock and a hard place. Things like assigning players to Interzonal tournaments ought to be handled by committees. In the heyday of the GMA, there could be no personal conflicts, since the 'Experts Committee' handled all qualification procedures. In Euwe's time these were his responsibility as FIDE President. So I did think Larsen's reaction was overly harsh, although at the same time it illustrated something important: in 1973 Larsen's world championship ambitions were still completely alive.

The Tilburg organizers didn't hold Larsen's outburst against Euwe against him. He remained a welcome guest, also in the following four years. With his uncompromising play he could always be counted on to contribute heavily towards the success of the tournament. And socially he could hold his own as well. One night we were talking till very late in the bar of the 'De Bosrand' hotel in Oisterwijk, the woodland village where we were lodged. All other participants had long since gone to bed, but barkeeper Frans kept the bar open, because he found the conversations between Larsen and me so interesting. He continued to fill our glasses, unbeknownst to Larsen and me, who were totally engrossed in our discussion. The

result was that we were still sitting at the bar at 6.30 in the morning and that Frans was the only person able to remember the last part of the conversation afterwards.

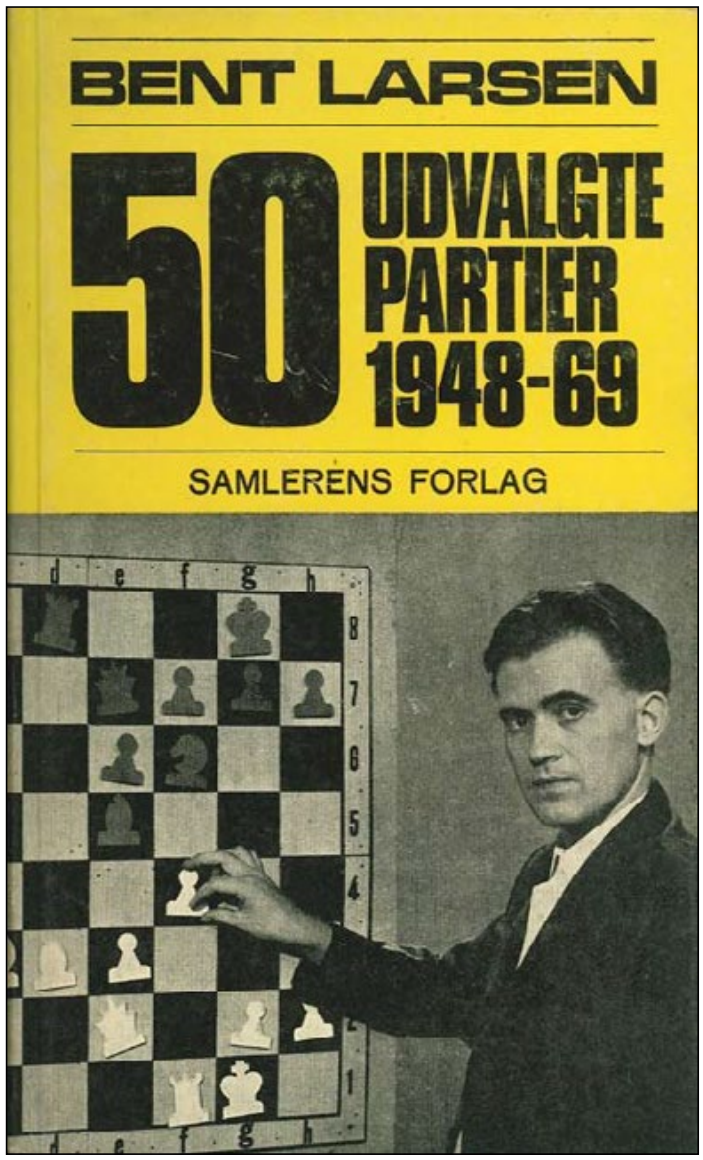
Donner and Larsen were known as the greatest talkers among the chess players. Both were able to hold forth superbly and with great aplomb. According to Donner himself, Larsen was his superior in this respect. They once flew together from Bristol to Amsterdam in a small Fokker plane. They hit serious turbulence on their way and the passengers had some precarious moments when the little plane started losing height. Later, Donner told me that the situation seemed so serious that 'even Larsen shut up for a while'.

Yet Larsen often restrained himself in a conversation and was well capable of listening, which was one of the main reasons why he made for such excellent company.

During the super-tournaments in Tilburg Larsen was never in the running for first place, but in other events he was lethal. In 1979 the two of us played in the fourth Vidmar Memorial Tournament in Bled/Portoroz. I was anxious to win the tournament, and Larsen turned out to have similar plans. The opening ceremony was awash with copious amounts of wine.

'Who is going to win the tournament?' one of the organizers asked us. I politely waved him aside with some non-committal reply, but Larsen had no time for such conventions. Throwing back a glass of white wine he declared, brimming with self-confidence: 'I am going to win this tournament.'

I was a bit taken aback by his outspoken candour and often thought about it during the tournament. I ended up winning it a point ahead of Larsen. During the final banquet I was presented with a work of art which depicted a somewhat slavering beast of prey. The question was who was going to make a speech on behalf of the players, Larsen or me. 'You are the tiger, you make the speech', Larsen said quick as a flash.



Bent Larsen's best games collection, first published in Denmark in 1969 and subsequently translated in various languages, was an instant classic.

In 1980, Larsen played many tournaments, with sharply diverging results. He started well. In the second Bugojno super-tournament he took off like an express train, only conceding three draws in his first seven games, against Karpov, me and another player. Larsen played an incredibly strong, economic kind of chess, smoothly gathering small advantages and striking mercilessly as soon as his opponent got into time-trouble. He was playing even more strongly, in fact, than in his heyday a decade earlier.

In other respects, too, he was emphatically present in Bugojno. Larsen had the habit of attentively following the post-mortems of other players. 'You are under the bad influence of Romanishin', he said to Tal, who had weakened his pawn structure in hopes of grabbing the initiative. This was a sharp observation that I completely agreed with. Later, Larsen defeated Tal with subtle play from a seemingly harmless position.

After seven rounds Larsen was one point ahead of me and one-and-a-half points ahead of Karpov. Then his energy began to flag, which is not so surprising for a person in his mid-40s. Larsen failed to win another game, whereas Karpov – not without some luck – won all of them. In the last round, Larsen could still have made shared first after totally outplaying Ljubojevic. 'If I don't win this, I will have to see a doctor,' he confided to me in the room where we drank coffee. This tallied with Larsen's viewpoint that lack of form should be seen as an illness. And what he had feared came to pass. On move 39 he let the win slip, allowing Karpov to wrap up the tournament.

One month later, in London, Larsen played well below his level. We were lodged in the Grosvenor Hotel. It had sounded great, because the Grosvenor is one of the top London hotels. But there was a slight problem: our hotel was the Grosvenor behind Victoria Station, a hotel that had long served as a simple stopping place for rail travellers. It was faded glory with

no style at all. At nine o'clock the first morning the fire alarm went off. Nothing to get worked up about, you'd think, but Larsen, who was used to lying in till very late, was quite put out. Later he emphasized that when the fire alarm went off, he immediately knew this would be a bad tournament for him. It wasn't so much that he used the fire alarm as an excuse; to him it was an omen.

In the tournaments in Amsterdam and Tilburg that followed, Larsen also played badly. At times you could catch a glimpse of the wizard who had dominated Bugojno, for example against Ribli in Amsterdam and against Karpov in Tilburg. For the rest he was unrecognizable. Sometimes it seemed as if his thoughts were elsewhere, as if he had other ambitions besides chess. And maybe that was actually the case.

'Have you ever considered becoming Prime Minister of Holland?' he once asked me. I must say I found it quite an astounding question. The profession of chess player is actually the best job you can have. Why would you aspire to attending deadly boring parliamentary party meetings? But Larsen was serious. He himself seemed to harbour this ambition (in Denmark), even though he didn't actually say so.

Larsen had a lively interest in all kinds of subjects related to politics. Once we were talking about Christiania, the hippy freestate on the bulwarks of Christianshavn in Copenhagen. The Danish government was considering closing Christiania at the time. According to Larsen, he was considering giving up his Danish citizenship if they really did. I was quite moved by this show of solidarity with my generation. Christiania still exists, although the large market with cannabis stalls has gone. But you can still order a bottle of chablis for considerably less money than in any bar in the centre of Copenhagen.

After three failed tournaments Larsen played magnificently in the third Clarin tournament in Buenos Aires. It probably had something to do with the atmosphere there that he managed to regain his top form. We played in a large theatre, with thousands of spectators following the games on the stage every day. The newspaper *Clarin*, which sponsored the tournament, functioned as its bulletin. All games were published. It was an extremely inspiring environment.

Larsen played long manoeuvring games. His first seven games weren't decided till the second session, after having been adjourned after 40 moves. In Buenos Aires they had special days for adjourned games, so it could happen that Larsen won four games in one day. After 11 rounds he had only conceded three draws, against Karpov,

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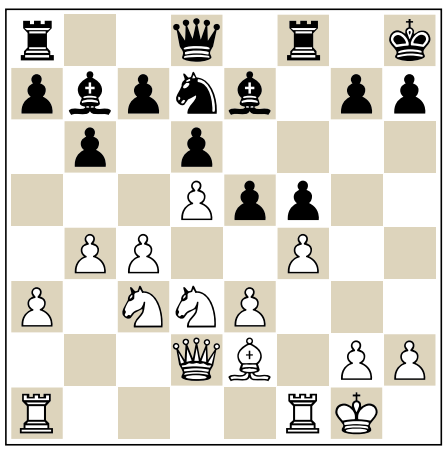
me and someone else. It was even more impressive than in Bugojno – this was a World Champion at work. But again he couldn't stick the pace. Larsen lost the last two games, allowing me to get within half a point of him. Karpov, completely off form, was lagging far behind.

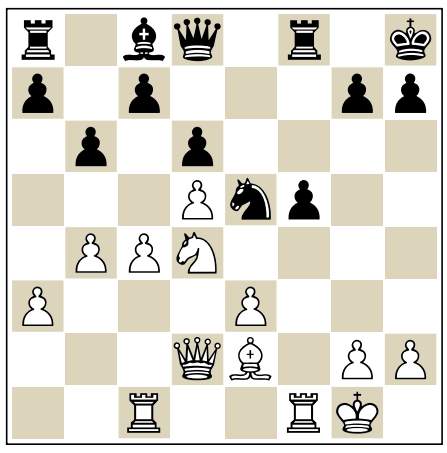
After Buenos Aires, Larsen never won another major tournament. His best result was in Niksic 1983, where he finished second after Kasparov. He kept winning the odd second-tier tournament, where you sometimes saw games of superior quality. A good example is the following strategic battle against one of the coming men of a new generation.

NI 13.6 – E44
Matthew Sadler
Bent Larsen
London 1989

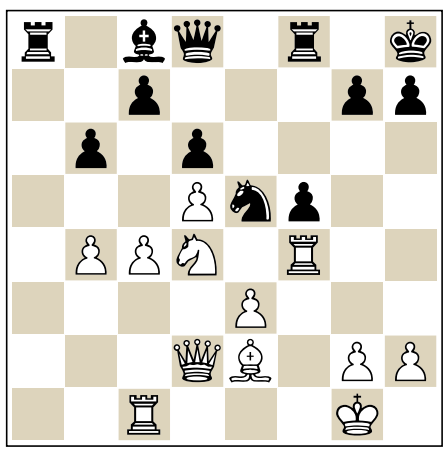
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 b6 5.♘e2 ♘e4 6.♗d2 ♘xd2 7.♕xd2 0-0 8.a3 ♗e7 9.♘f4 d6 10.♗e2 ♗b7 11.0-0 ♘d7 12.d5 e5 13.♘d3 ♔h8 White has more space, but against this Black has the bishop pair. Larsen decides to postpone the march of his f-pawn for another while.
14.b4 f5 15.f4



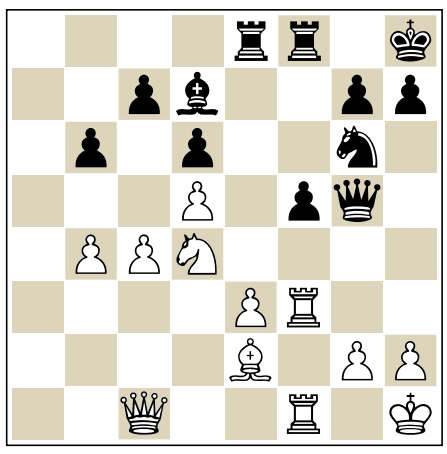
15...♗a6! A subtle move. Black wants to disrupt the coordination of the white pieces. The white knight pair is well positioned, but the attack on c4 drives one of them to a less favourable square.
16.♘b5 ♗f6 17.♖ac1 ♗c8 Pure strategy. The bishop has done its job on a6. Now it wants to go to square d7. **18.fxe5 ♗xe5 19.♘xe5 ♘xe5 20.♘d4**



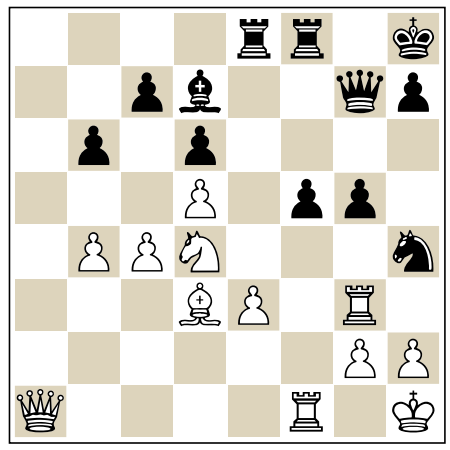
20...a5 An important strategic move in these kinds of positions. Black is going to open the a-file.
21.♖f4 axb4 22.axb4



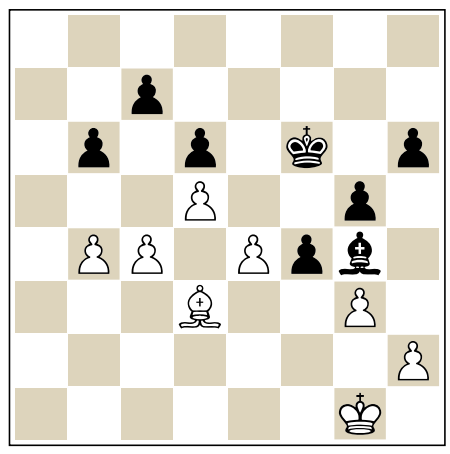
22...♗d7 Inaccurate, since White could have played 23.c5 now. 22...♕e7 would have prevented this.
23.♖cf1 ♕g5 24.♔h1 ♘g6 25.♖4f3 ♘e5 26.♖f4 ♖ae8 No draw!
27.♕c1 ♘g6 28.♖4f3



28...♘h4 Forcing the white rook to the bad square g3.
29.♖g3 ♕e7 30.♗d3 g5
Superior strategy. Expansion on the kingside is justified because Black has a firm grip on the centre.
31.♕a1 ♕g7



32.♘c2?
Principally wrong. Swapping the queens brings no relief. On the contrary, the fewer pieces there are on the board, the more the bad position of the white king's rook will make itself felt. Correct was 32.♕c3 in order to go for c4-c5 after all.
32...h6 33.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 34.♖f4 ♘g6 35.♖f2 ♘e5 36.♗f1 ♖a8 37.♔g1 ♖a2 38.♘d4 ♖xf2 39.♔xf2 ♖a8
Everything according to the book. Once Black has swapped one set of rooks, the other rook will penetrate via the a-file.
40.e4 Another concession; otherwise the rook will never come into play.
40...♘g4+ 41.♔g1 f4 42.♖f3 ♖a1 43.g3 ♘e5 44.♖f2 ♖d1 45.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 46.♖xf3 ♗g4 47.♖d3 ♖xd3 48.♗xd3 ♔f6



49.h4 ♔e5 The king penetrates with devastating force. White resigns. A victory that must have pleased Larsen no end...

NAME: **Susan Polgar**

ELO-RATING: **2577**

DATE OF BIRTH: **April 19, 1969**

PLACE OF BIRTH: **Budapest, Hungary**

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: **Lubbock, Texas, USA**

NEW IN CHESS

What is your favourite colour?
Red and Black.

What kind of food makes you happy?
Sweet.

And what drink?
Freshly squeezed fruit juices.

Who is your favourite author?
Ferenc (Franz) Molnar.

What was the best book you ever read?
Animal Farm by George Orwell.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Coming to America and *Pretty Woman*.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Richard Gere and Ben Stiller.

And a favourite actress?
Cameron Diaz and Sandra Bullock.

What music do you like to listen to?
I like all sorts of music, but pop or modern country would be at the top of my list.

Do you have a favourite painter or artist?
Just to name two: Michelangelo and Vasarely.

Who are the three greatest chess players of all time?
If I have to pick just three: Capablanca, Alekhine and Bobby Fischer.

What do you see as your best result ever?
Becoming the first woman to earn the GM title based on traditional requirements.

What was the best game you ever played?
One of my all-time favourites is against Chiburdanidze at the Calvia Olympiad in 2004.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Bobby Fischer, because he almost single-handedly revolutionized chess, despite his shortcomings.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
Capablanca's Best Games (in Hungarian translation).

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
One is surely Kasparov-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
Jane living with Tarzan in the jungle ☺.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Bill Gates, Simon Cowell, Hugh Grant, to three separate dinners ☺.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
To play the piano. Maybe one day when I will have more time.

What is your greatest fear?
Getting sick.

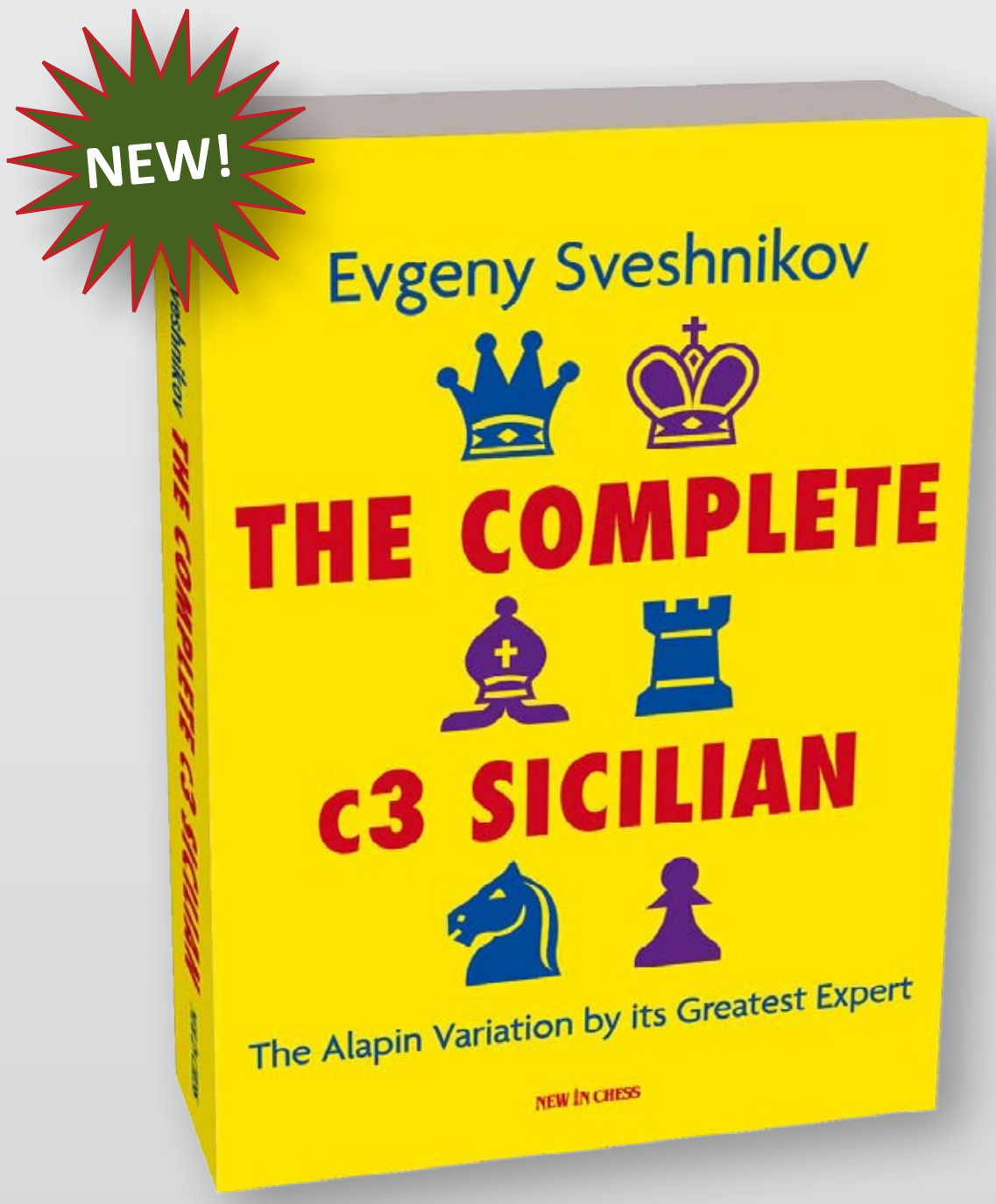
What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
Other than my family, my computer, with lots of music in it.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
There should be entertaining chess 'shows' on TV. That in turn would popularize chess and could greatly improve the lives of many chess players.

What is the stupidest rule in chess?
Stalemate.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?
Absolutely. That is why I am so passionate to try to get chess into the schools as an educational tool.

Everything you need in order to combat Black's most dangerous reply to 1.e4



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